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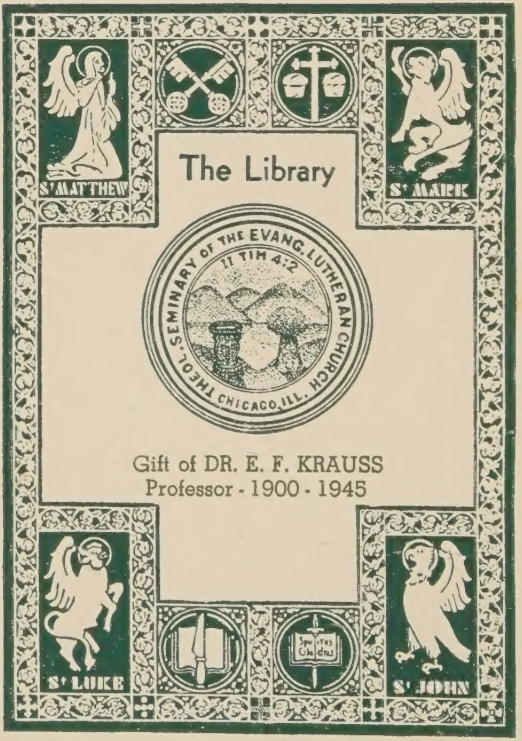
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HOW TO UNDERSTAND PHILOSOPHY

A. E. Baker

DORAN'S MODERN READERS' BOOKSHELF
Edited by Sidney Dark

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HOW TO UNDERSTAND PHILOSOPHY

FROM SOCRATES TO BERGSON

BY

A. E. BAKER

"What, then, is that which is able to conduct a man? One thing and only one, philosophy."

Marcus Aurelius

18387

NEW YORK

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HOW TO UNDERSTAND PHILOSOPHY
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TO
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Of all human ambitions an open mind eagerly expectant of new discoveries and ready to remold convictions in the light of added knowledge and dispelled ignorances and misapprehensions, is the noblest, the rarest and the most difficult to achieve.

JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON, in "*The Humanizing of Knowledge.*"

It is the purpose of DORAN'S MODERN READERS' BOOKSHELF to bring together in brief, stimulating form a group of books that will be fresh appraisals of many things that interest modern men and women. Much of History, Literature, Biography and Science is of intense fascination for readers to-day and is lost to them by reason of being surrounded by a forbidding and meticulous scholarship.

These books are designed to be simple, short, authoritative, and such as would arouse the

interest of intelligent readers. As nearly as possible they will be intended, in Professor Robinson's words quoted above, "to remold convictions in the light of added knowledge."

This "adding of knowledge" and a widespread eagerness for it are two of the chief characteristics of our time. Never before, probably, has there been so great a desire to know, or so many exciting discoveries of truth of one sort or another. Knowledge and the quest for it has now about it the glamour of an adventure. To the quickening of this spirit in our day DORAN'S MODERN READERS' BOOKSHELF hopes to contribute.

In addition to the volumes announced here others are in preparation for early publication. The Editor will welcome suggestions for the BOOKSHELF and will be glad to consider any manuscripts suitable for inclusion.

S. D.

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HOW TO
UNDERSTAND PHILOSOPHY

This little book does not pretend to be adequate or original: I shall be satisfied if it succeeds in being simple and accurate. I have to thank the Editors of the *Church Times* and the *Guardian* for permission to use material from my pen which has appeared in reviews and articles in those papers. I am grateful, also, to the Rev. A. E. M. Glover for his kindness in reading through the manuscript and for his suggestions for its improvement.

A. E. B.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND PHILOSOPHY

Chapter I

Socrates and His Predecessors

GREECE! The word has a compelling power over the imagination of every man who cares for the things of the mind. We owe to Greece many of the things that we value most; the foundation and substance of culture and civilisation. From that little country the drama, sculpture, mathematics, science, and—not least—"divine philosophy," have come to us. The Greeks learned mathematics and science from Egypt and Babylon, although they soon progressed in these things far beyond their teachers. The impulse to philosophy, however, was native. In that they owed little or nothing to any predecessors.

The story of Western speculation begins in the sixth century before Christ. It was a great

age, comparable with the Renaissance in its mental activity and widespread interest in, and endowment of, culture. Peisistratus and his sons in Athens, and Croesus in Ionia (that part of Asia Minor which faces Greece across the Aegean Sea), made their courts brilliant with culture. The first school of Philosophy arose at Miletus, in Ionia, a country whose rich fertility left its people leisure for any intellectual pursuits for which they had a mind. The best known of the Milesian Philosophers is THALES, who flourished about 600 B.C.

The problems and distinctions which we describe in such words as material and spiritual, or moral and physical, had not yet emerged, but these earliest philosophers tackled one problem which has attracted thinkers ever since. Is there any permanent unity behind all the variety and change of the world? The great thinkers are ranged in opposing camps by their answers to that question. Those who said, "Yes, the ultimate reality is *one*," are called Monists (from the Greek word *monos*, which means "alone" or "only"); those who said, "No, there is no unity behind or within na-

ture's plurality," are called Pluralists. The Milesian philosophers were monists.

Thales, the first and greatest of them, who was still alive in 541 B.C., was a man of wide and varied interests, a financier who made a "corner" in olive oil, a military engineer who diverted the river Halys from its course, the first Greek geometer (he predicted the eclipse of 585 B.C.). We are more interested, however, in his intellectual curiosity, his bold imagination, and his talent for generalisation, for these are the qualities that make the philosopher. The chief question that he asked was, What is the stuff of which all things are made? We may be surprised to know that his answer was, Water!

The reason for this answer may have been that we can observe water taking the three forms of solid, liquid, and gas. Thales had observed that all living creatures, animals and plants alike, require moisture, and that even the fire of the sun seems to draw up water from the sea. He may have been influenced, too, by the poetical and mythological imagination that all things spring originally from Ocean.

Aristotle says that Thales taught that all things are full of gods. This does not mean that he was what is called an "animist," one who believes that there is a distinct soul or spirit in each thing that exists. It means that he did not think of water as the inert, merely material, thing it seems to us. In his thought matter, life, and mind were mingled without distinction.

The next name to be mentioned is one of the most attractive in all literature, that of the semi-legendary figure of PYTHAGORAS. About 532, he went from Samos, an island in the Aegean, to Southern Italy, where at Croton he formed his pupils into a sort of religious order, with an elaborate sacramental ritual derived, probably, from the Orphic Mysteries. He divided men into three classes, the lovers of money and pleasure, the lovers of honour, fame, and practical activity, and the lovers of contemplation and wisdom. The "love of wisdom" or *philosophy* is said to be a word first used by Pythagoras, who perhaps looked on philosophy as the pure religion which alone can cleanse the heart and assure it of salvation.

Pythagoras taught that the unlimited substratum of all things is air. The rich variety of the external world arises out of the one unlimited and simple world substance through the action on this *Unlimited* of another principle, that of Limit or *Determination*. These have been opposed and joined to each other from all eternity. This warring fellowship has been the marriage from which separate individual things have sprung. All sound, normal things owe their definite and articulate nature to a harmony and balance of the Unlimited and the Limited. Each thing is a specific number, a specific amount of the Indeterminate. The Principle of Determination in the universe is Number (in the sense of "quantity"), and different things are only different numbers. Pythagoras arrived at this apparently fantastic conclusion because he thought of numbers geometrically. The later Pythagoreans modified the teaching of the Master to the assertion that things are "like" numbers.

Orphism emphasised a sort of moral dualism, setting the soul in distinct opposition to the body. Pythagoreanism combined this with

the logical opposition between Unlimited and Determinate, so that all logical distinctions came to have a moral complexion. Limit or Number represents the good, the indeterminate or infinite is evil. This dualism, fundamental to their whole view of reality, left the problem of the One and the Many as a definite heritage to later philosophy.

HERACLEITUS, who flourished in Ephesus about 490 B.C., was interested in the actual concrete *here* and *now* and *this*, in all the variety and change of the world of living experience, rather than in any abstract, unchanging unity which might be held to be the explanation of them. He found the meaning of the universe in the actual process of experience, in the flow of time and change in which we are all immersed. All things flow. Nothing remains the same. I stand on the river bank dabbling my toes in the stream, but I never put my foot twice into the same river. Difference and Multiplicity are as essential to the universe as are its Oneness and Identity. The One depends on the Many as entirely as do the Many on the One. If the Many disappeared, there would

be no One, because the Unity is no more than the activity manifest in the changing variety of the Many. It has been said that for Heracleitus reality was not a noun but a verb.

Opposition to Heracleitus was pressed to its logical conclusion by the Eleatics, of whom the most famous were PARMENIDES and his pupil ZENO. Parmenides taught at Elea in South Italy, from about 480 onwards. Plato always speaks of him with marked respect and it seems probable that Socrates met Zeno and his master when they visited Athens about 449. The Eleatics were the extreme monists of the ancient world. Parmenides was carried by the Sun-maidens up to the Gate of Night-and-Day, and there he was instructed in the difference between truth and appearance. Our perception of this changing world is mere delusion. We grasp the real world by our reason. It is unchangeably one and indivisible, with no qualities that can be discerned by the senses; it is all that is, without beginning or growth or decay or end, unmoving and immovable. The indivisibility and unchangeableness of the universe were emphasised in such an extreme way that the system

explained away, but did not explain, the difference between one thing and another. No reply to this criticism was, indeed, possible, except a counter-attack. Zeno, in his well-known fable of Achilles and the Tortoise, showed the absurdities latent in the belief that the universe is *not* one and indivisible.

Inevitably, the pendulum swung to the other extreme, and the men who followed Parmenides were pluralists of the most extreme kind. They can hardly be called a school, for they differed from one another in everything but their denial that the universe is a unity. Strictly speaking, of course, their teaching implies that there is no such thing as a universe; what is, is a plurality. DEMOCRITUS (born about 460) was the father of all atomic theories. For him the world was made up of endless permutations and combinations of indivisible atoms. EMPEDOCLES (born about 490) has the four elements, Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, and believes that the universe was made from these. He emphasises the reality of motion, although its origin is a problem which is beyond him. Both alike were trying to escape

from the still monotony of Parmenides' monism.

And now we pass to one of the greatest and most baffling, most attractive and most elusive, figures in the whole story of humanity. Few men have left so vivid an impression on the mind and conscience of the centuries as has SOCRATES, and few teachers are so difficult to interpret, if we are to be certain that we understand them. Socrates was born about 470 B.C., and was put to death in 400 or 399. His youth was passed in the splendid age of Pericles, a period which in its achievement and magnificence represents in the story of Athens what "the spacious times of great Elizabeth" stand for in our own history. Athens was a small democracy built on slavery. This system, essentially bad and impermanent, provided for the citizens leisure and opportunity for discussion. Five hundred years later their character was described: "All the Athenians and foreign visitors to Athens occupied themselves with nothing else than repeating or listening to the latest novelty" (Acts xvii. 21).

Socrates was an unusual combination of prophet and rationalist. From childhood he heard an inner voice, which seemed to him more than human, and always warned him when he was about to do anything against his own interests. He did not hear it during his trial, which fact persuaded him that death would not be an evil for him, but a good. But along with his humorous half-belief in his "familiar spirit" ("very rarely, if ever, has such a monitor been vouchsafed to any one else," he said) there goes a determined intellectual scepticism. His wisdom (and the Oracle at Delphi declared that there was no one wiser than Socrates) was that he knew nothing except that he knew nothing. He questioned everything. His method was characteristic and homely, it is well known, and must have been very irritating. During a conversation, somebody uses some general term, such as "wisdom." Socrates asks him to define the word. When he offers a definition, Socrates at once names particular examples to which the definition will not apply. Other definitions are offered, which at once suffer the same fate. In the end, the wretched person

contradicts himself. It is amusing to notice that those who talk to Socrates rarely take his negative attitude seriously. They always think that he has his own alternative suggestion ready to offer. His main concern, however, was to teach people to criticise their own principles. "The unexamined life is not worth living." But what was in form entirely negative was, from another point of view, positive. He tests moral principles by particular cases. Aristotle described the main service of Socrates to Philosophy as "introducing induction and definitions."

Socrates had been interested in the science of the Milesians, and in the mathematical and philosophical speculations of the Pythagoreans. But he had decided that such matters were beyond man's grasp. Only what is within man's control, that is, his own conduct, is worth discussing. But his negative dialectic implied not only this, but also his belief that sin and ignorance are the same thing. Men are unjust because they do not understand what justice is. This is difficult to reconcile with our ordinary experience; as Aristotle pointed out, it denies

the possibility of knowing the better and deliberately choosing the worse. The explanation of Socrates' position, however, is not far to seek. Greek teaching about sin had been concerned entirely with outward actions, not with motives. That meant that there was little distinction between sins and mistakes. Not only so, but Socrates commonly sought his illustrations in the industrial arts. In shoemaking or carpentering, right actions follow from knowledge, wrong actions from ignorance; and so must it be, he argued, with the art of life. But most important, if we are to understand his identification of virtue and knowledge, must be our recognition of the perfection of his own self-control. That is why he did not remember how difficult others find it to do the things that they know to be right. And yet he had not attained self-mastery without a struggle. A certain Zosimus, a foreigner, who prided himself on judging by looks, once told Socrates that his face reflected all the worst vices and passions. Socrates replied, "You know me, sir. The vices are there; *but reason has dethroned them.*" The exaltation of rea-

son proves that something else had tried to play the tyrant.

Socrates' teaching about virtue seems to make morality the prerogative of the leisured and the well-educated, those whose work is done by slaves. Pressed in its extreme form (wisdom = knowledge = virtue = happiness) the principle is demonstrably untrue. Virtue includes right desire as well as right knowledge. But his view is not without some truth. Ignorance is a factor in the origin and growth of sin, and right thinking has its place in the character which, as a matter of fact, we all admire. Knowledge and faith are the roots without which the good life can hardly grow. But Socrates' doctrine certainly implies a very optimistic estimate of human nature.

The prophet Socrates had a prophet's "call." He fulfilled that call by doing nothing but going to and fro, endeavouring to persuade all the Athenians, young and old, not to care about the body and riches, but first and foremost about the soul. ("I fear that there may be a sin, when justice is evil spoken of, in standing by and failing to offer help or succour, while

breath or speech remain to me.") He was the founder of the "spiritual" view of conduct and character. He lived a life of world-denial. Born rich, he was always mocked at for taking his illustrations from the workshop. He held that artisans knew their business, but that many who professed to teach were ignorant of theirs. About the time of his "call" he became poor, and his poverty made him a popular joke. Because he went barefoot, he was "born to spite the shoemakers." He is a "stout-hearted fellow, who, for all his hunger, never stooped to be a parasite." He claimed that that kind of life gives the most happiness. He did not return evil for evil. He was opposed to tyranny. He became an example to the ancient world, so that ordinary men learned to ask in any perplexity, "What would Socrates do? What would Socrates say?"

Books to Read

The most satisfactory account of the thinkers dealt with in this chapter is—

Early Greek Philosophy, 3rd edit., 1920. By J. Burnet.

A shorter and popular, but sufficiently trustworthy, description is—

History of Greek Philosophy, Thales to Democritus. By B. A. G. Fuller, Ph.D. 1923.

Plato's account of the historical Socrates, his life and teaching, is to be found in the *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo,* and *Gorgias.*

Chapter II

Plato and Aristotle

PLATO (427-347 B.C.) was the biographer, expositor, and pupil of Socrates, who developed his philosophy and made it the source and inspiration of noble thinking from that day to this. He was about twenty years of age when he met his master, he knew him for about seven years, and survived him for more than half a century. Socrates was the most powerful intellectual and moral influence in Plato's life, but the pupil attained to a much wider horizon than his master's, a more universal culture, developing a personality of enormous spiritual grasp and insight. His teaching is expressed in an artistic form of great attractiveness, in dialogues, which have been described as "dramas in which speech is the action, and Socrates and his companions are the actors." These have been very little touched by the passage of time, and are fresh and readable for the ordinary, unprofessional

philosopher to-day, as they have been in every age since they were written. Whatever the reader's interests, he will find something in Plato's Dialogues to stimulate him. In the *Republic*, to take but one example, the feminist will be interested to find the equality of men and women asserted with little qualification, even in politics and war; the social philosopher will find that the community of women and children, which might equally well be called the community of husbands and fathers, does not rest on any contempt for women, but, fantastic as it seems to a modern reader, is a serious attempt to solve the ever-new problem of the conflict between the claims of the Family and those of the State; the man who is interested in the history of thought will see, what appears over and over again in the thinkers with whom this book will deal, that psychology and philosophy are intimately related to the organisation of the State in which a thinker lives, and to the theories implied in it. The ideal of the philosopher as king has not been without its influence on the education of the governing classes of England, and of

the men who have made the Imperial Civil Service the efficient instrument it has been. The real humanistic criticism of mere politics, which has never been quite silent in Europe, is all summed up in Plato's words: "States are not things of stock or stone, but depend on the character of the men in them, which drags all else with it whatever way it inclines." And our post-war practice of, and belief in, *propaganda* was understood twenty-four centuries ago. "If any persons are to have the privilege of lying, either at home or abroad, they will be the rulers of the State (says Plato); and they may be allowed to lie for the public good. . . . But for a private man to lie in return to the rulers is to be deemed a more heinous fault than . . . for a sailor not to tell the captain truly how matters are going on in a ship. . . . If, then, the ruler catches anybody beside himself lying in the State, he will punish him for introducing a practice which is equally subversive of ship or State." In Plato, philosophy is young, with all the humanity and hopefulness of youth. To read or, at any rate, to read *in*, his dialogues is part of a liberal education.

At the great moments in Plato's dialogues, when argument fails before the highest realities of life, and the deepest assumptions of our thinking, the Philosopher rises to the level of a Prophet and a poet, and creates the Myths. In the Myths, Plato the Poet and, perhaps, Plato the pupil of Socrates, find their most characteristic expression. They put before us, in picture, or story, or symbol, the mighty hopes and intuitions that make us men. They are more than allegories, though some of them (the well-known story of the Cave, for example) are allegories as well as myths. The lesson or meaning of the myth cannot, without loss, be disentangled from the story, and expressed in some plain statement or moral. As in the case of a great picture or sonata, if you ask about a myth, "What does it mean?" the best answer is, "It means itself." The truth about ultimate things cannot be expressed in definitions, and stories affect the motives and actions of people more directly and deeply and permanently than theoretical or scientific statements can do. It is probably true that reasoning cannot grasp the "whole" of things, or see the

unique and particular and individual things which give quality and meaning to existence. So it is, for example, that the argument for immortality in the *Republic* fails to convince the intellect, but the myth of the sons of Er which follows it moves the heart to a sure and certain hope.

Plato's development began with Socrates, and the earliest dialogues seem to reflect almost uncriticised the teaching of the older man. Socrates spent his life seeking the principle which underlies all the particular applications of a moral concept. This, in his views, is really knowing what we mean by "just" or "holy" or "temperate." True knowledge is knowledge of general terms, which is almost the same thing as saying that general relations or *universals* (a term invented by Aristotle) constitute the real world. The particular objects perceived by the senses do not really exist, for they are within the sphere, not of knowledge, but of opinion. They have reality only in so far as they share in that of the general principle or *idea* under which they are included. Wherever a number of things is called by the same name

(as, *e. g.*, this chair, that chair, an arm-chair, a deck-chair; or a good girl, a good dinner, a good song) there is a corresponding "idea" or "form," such as chair, goodness. Ideas are not perceived by the senses, but appropriated or conceived by the mind. For Plato, they are realities which correspond to our general notions. He gave to the Socratic universals a substantial existence on their own account.

Ideas are divided into *rational* and *ethical*. The former embrace mathematical forms (circle, triangle, square), and intellectual generalisations from particular objects to a group. This latter kind includes the Ideas of classes of things in nature (the *genus* or *species* of modern science) and also the Ideas of classes of manufactured objects (table, pen). Plato's chief interest, however, is in the ethical ideas or, as one might call them, spiritual values, and it is noteworthy that they include not only goodness, justice, beauty, and the like, but also their opposites, evil, injustice, ugliness, and so on.

The Idea is the One which gives meaning and reality to the Many; it is eternal, always the same, everywhere, in all relations, satisfying

the human craving for an "abiding city," a resting place from change and multiplicity; it is the perfection of all the essential characteristics of the thing in question; the Idea becomes the norm or standard, the ideal; the ethical idea in the soul is like the model which the artist studies in the work of imitation, and it is difficult to believe that the perfect types of imperfect particulars have only subjective existence. Particular things can only be described with the help of universals, without which, indeed, we cannot speak or think. Plato made no attempt to explain how Ideas exist; he held, indeed, that they are not the products of any mind, not even of the mind of God; the mind does not form them, but discovers them. It has been suggested that particular things exist in the sense in which *experience* exists, but that the Ideas exist in the sense in which *knowledge* exists. It does not much matter, however, how we take them to *be*, so long as we accept their being and bow to their authority. If you reject the Idea of Justice, you will scarcely retain any deep love for what is only a name; neither will you find it easy to maintain any notion of

purpose or meaning in the world, unless you believe that the Idea of what is to be evolved, already, in some manner exists.

Plato finds the unity of the Ideas in the Idea of the Good. Everything is what it *is* in so far as it fulfils its function, or realises its purpose. An ear that does not hear is, properly speaking, not an ear at all. And Socrates says that a ruler who cannot realise the well-being of the ruled is no ruler. So the universe, also, is defined by its end, its purpose, its goal—the ultimate good. Plato holds, in other words, that the *good* is the ground and cause of all things.

If we ask what Plato means by "the good," it is not easy to give a definite answer. In his Seventh Epistle he says, "There is no writing of mine on this subject, nor ever shall be. It is not capable of expression like other branches of study; but as the result of long intercourse and a common life spent upon the thing, a light is suddenly kindled as from a leaping spark, and when it has reached the soul, it thenceforth finds nutriment for itself." The *Idea* of Temperance or Self-mastery, as a man contemplates it, comes to cover more of life's activi-

ties, and to be involved in a more fundamental way in each of them; as a man learns to make his life an expression of Temperance, his love of it increases, and in comparison all other pleasures lose their appeal. So, through this practical and theoretical dwelling upon it, Temperance becomes Fortitude, the Soul's virtue of resistance to temptation, until this Idea in turn is absorbed in the larger Idea of Wisdom; the Soul learns to judge the nature of things, and reaches at last the supreme Idea of the Good. In contemplation of that Idea, and communion with It, man "becomes the friend of God and attains to immortality, if ever mortal has attained."

The Philosopher, therefore, is the only good man, in the fullest and proper sense of the word. Others may have an opinion or belief about the good, by nature or the gift of God. The chief way of developing this is by self-discipline. He who would live the life of virtue or reason must "die daily" to the life of the senses. Plato defined Philosophy as "a practice of death," and any idea of his system is incomplete which ignores the ascetic element in it

which he derived partly from Orphism but also, perhaps, from Socrates, whose "inner voice," we remember, always said "no." There is also, however, in Plato's system, much emphasis on education, as the positive side of the training for the good life. Not the written word, but the fruitful personal contact of teacher and pupil, is important here. Much of Plato's life was given up to the practical work of education. It has been remarked, in this connection, that it was the Philosophers who first learned how to use private gardens, and the *Academy* is the first model of the great European universities. All learning, Plato held, is remembering, the making explicit what is implicit, the recognition of the universal, rational Idea in the particular things of sense. Culture passes from the beauty of outward things to the beauty of reason and the soul. Beauty and goodness are the ladder by which men attain to the good character.

For Plato (as, later, for S. Paul) the soul of man is threefold. Reason, the divine in him, makes him man. The "appetites" are the impulses which have bodily causes. The

"spirited" element is the seat of anger, courage, the love of honour, aversion to disgrace. The virtuous man is he in whom there is harmony, reason being ruler. This "City of Man-soul" is like an ideal Republic, in which the governing class is the embodiment of wisdom, the military class represents the "spirit," both being distinct from the workers, who represent the "appetites."

The philosophy of Plato was essentially religious. To the moral and intellectual agnosticism which declared that man, with his changing needs and whims and his imperfect knowledge, is the measure of all things, Plato responded with the assertion of eternal, unchanging principles, which alone are real, and give what half-reality it possesses to this shadow of things that passes away. In his old age he summed it up in the *dictum* that God is the measure of all things. And Plato, incurably religious, recognised that there is a deep antagonism between the point of view which is characteristic of religion and that which is characteristic of science. To the scientist, God, if He exist, is one Person among others; He is part of the whole of things, and religion seems to be

claiming that the part must rule the whole. For the religious man, on the contrary, science and metaphysics, in their search for an absolute unity which must be the ground of all existence, seem to be making the universe more important than God. It is natural, therefore, that Plato had a consistent and complete contempt for science. He tries to deal with its subject-matter deductively, not inductively. He accepts, without trying to cure, the imperfect equipment of his age for any kind of scientific observation. Our acquaintance with the sensible world is mere opinion; knowledge belongs to the unseen. In the last resort, as we have seen, Plato's attitude in morals is a pure asceticism. He underlines the opposition of body and soul which he had taken over from the Orphic mysteries (it fits naturally into his doctrine of Ideas); and, although he can find no satisfactory rational *proof* of the soul's immortality, he shares the sweet hopes of those who look for a city which hath foundations. In all these things he is the source of a long tradition which has been persistent in European thought, and not least in England.

Aristotle, his great pupil, takes the other side in nearly all these controversies. He, more than any other single man, established the experimental and biological bases of science. His religion is a vague and shadowy thing, and he has no interest in immortality. From that day to this, all speculative thinkers have been divided into Platonists or Aristotelians. There, in the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ, European philosophy reached an Everest-like height that it has never equalled since. From the birth of Socrates until the death of Aristotle is only a century and a half, and Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle supplied the forms which European thinkers have used ever since, and much of the matter which has been put into those forms.

Aristotle was born at Stagira (that is why he is sometimes referred to as the Stagirite) in 384 B.C. He came to Athens at eighteen years of age, and joined the Academy, of which Plato was the head. He remained a member of it, learning and teaching, for twenty years. From one point of view it may be said that he continued the development from Socrates. In

Ethics, for example, Plato is a bridge from Socrates to Aristotle. The style of the latter, however, is very different from that of his master. While Plato was one of the greatest masters of the art of literature in any age, Aristotle's writing is rough and careless, with very little attention to form. He left the Academy at Plato's death in 343, and went to become tutor to Alexander of Macedon, at that time a boy of thirteen. He held that post for three years. In 335 he started a school in Athens, the Lyceum, in imitation of, and in rivalry with, the Academy. He and his followers were called Peripatetics, it is said because they walked up and down while teaching and debating. In 323 he left Athens to escape a charge of impiety. He died at Chalcis in Euboea in 322.

Aristotle's is the most comprehensive intellect in the history of thought—he is the "master of those who know." Even Hegel's universal grasp falls short of his. The plain man can see what this means if he asks himself, If we leave the Bible out of consideration, what is the greatest book that has ever been written?

Many answers might be given to that question, but it would not be obviously absurd to suggest the "Nicomachaean Ethics" or the "Politics" or the "Poetics" (all by Aristotle). No other writer has three books to his name worthy to be put beside these. Unfortunately, this means that the only treatment of Aristotle possible in the space at our disposal must be grotesquely inadequate.

One of the unsolved problems of Plato's system is the connection between appearance and reality. He found the reality or essence of individual things in the general class to which they belong. But having reached his world of eternal, unchanging, perfect Ideas, he cannot show how or why they condition a world of imperfection, and change, and concrete individuality. Aristotle avoids this absolute cleavage. To him the reality or essence or substance of an individual thing cannot, except for thought, be separated from the individual itself. The word he uses is "form," and each individual being has its own form. That which is organised and defined and made concrete and real by the forms is called the "matter" of the particular

thing. When we think of John Jones, his soul is "form," his body is "matter." If we think of his body, we can say that the various organs are "matter," but "body" is the "form." Going further, we can think of the organ as "form," and of the tissues of which it is composed as "matter." Further still, we regard the chemical compounds as matter, and the tissue into which they are organised as form. The matter and form of things are distinguishable by thought but inseparable in reality. Form can be thought of as the realisation or actualisation or fulfilment of the potentiality which is matter. Aristotle in one place compares the form of a thing to its function or purpose. It is clear, then, that matter is not a certain kind of thing—as we speak of matter as distinct from spirit—it is a purely relative term, relative to form. Matter never exists bare, but always *informed*. To be quite consistent, then, Aristotle ought to hold that forms have no independent existence. If the soul of John Jones is the "form" of which his body is the matter, it seems to follow that a soul can no more exist apart from its particular body

than its power of cutting can exist apart from the axe whose function it is (Aristotle himself uses this particular illustration of the axe). Yet, quite inconsistently, Aristotle seems to say that the human "reason" exists before and after its period of union with a body. He suggests that the soul may be the actuality of the body in the same fashion as a sailor is of his ship! Aristotle also believes that God exists as pure form, as do the intelligences that move the spheres.

Aristotle's description of Causes is important and well known. There are four kinds of cause in nature. The *material* cause, as bronze may be called the cause of a statue, since without the bronze that statue could not exist; the *formal* cause, the form or pattern which the thing has been made to assume (the statue is of the Burghers of Calais, let us say); the *efficient* cause, the sculptor who made it, Monsieur Rodin; the *final* cause, the purpose or goal for which the work of art was created (let us suggest to purify the emotional relations between two great peoples). Obviously the last, the *final* cause, is the most important of the

four. It is only when the mind has discovered the *purpose* of anything that it is satisfied, and ceases to ask questions. This is its *real* cause. (The first two, of course, are what we have already examined as "matter" and "form.") Aristotle is in favour of "teleology," as against *mere* mechanism. He aims at explaining the development of a living organism, for example, by the result which is arrived at. Evolution, that is to say, is "explained" not by the beginnings of the process, but by the final stages. Or we may say that Aristotle is in favour of studying the parts in the light of the whole, rather than of viewing the whole as merely a sum of its parts. This does not mean, of course, that creatures are made to serve the purposes of man, or of any other creature but themselves. The end of each species is "internal" to the species itself. Sharks have their mouth on their under-surface in order that, while they turn to bite, their prey may escape—but also to save them from over-eating. Aristotle's teleology is an "immanent" teleology.

Aristotle's theology is closely related to this. He believes that time and change must be, from

their nature, eternal. The only continuous change is motion. We can only be satisfied with an explanation of motion which relates it to a cause of motion which is not itself moving —an unmoved mover. But an unmoved mover cannot cause motion by directly impinging on the body that is to move—by pushing it, for example,—but only by being a *final* cause—by awakening a longing or love which in its turn causes a movement. So the eternal movements of the heavenly spheres arise from the longing for God of the intelligences which move them. God, supremely good and desirable, moves the universe as the desire for the star moves the moth, as the lady moves her beloved. God Himself desires nothing, for He is perfect, He can love nothing but what is perfect, He can know nothing but what is perfect, that is, Himself. When one reflects how penetrating has been Aristotle's influence on Christian theology, it is somewhat disconcerting to realise how little common ground he shares with it. It is true that he holds that the cause of all things is love for God—He is the goal for which the universe longs. But Aris-

totle never thought of Him as the Creator, he had no belief in Providence, and even thought it probable that God is not conscious of the world or of its longing for Him.

Aristotle's *Ethics* is the most systematic account of the science of human conduct in pre-Christian times. His doctrine of the ethical "mean" has been especially influential. Virtue, he taught, is in every case the mean, or middle point, between two opposite vices; courage is a virtue; both rashness and cowardice are vices. This doctrine is a protest against the false asceticism which condemns all natural impulse, and also against the "immoralism" which accepts, uncritically, any impulse as the guide to action merely because it is "natural." It is also noteworthy that Aristotle has seen that in many cases our natural reactions to situations go in pairs. There is a tendency to rush into danger, as well as a tendency to avoid it. At the same time, Aristotle's attempt to arrange these things in a rigid scheme is unsatisfactory, for it is not really possible to measure feelings and motives in quantities like this. It also seems probable that such things are more natu-

rally arranged in pairs, rather than in threes. The opposite of courage is cowardice; the opposite of rashness is discretion; and discretion and courage are not quite the same thing.

The other best-known element in Aristotle's ethical theory is probably his portrait of the "great-souled" man, whose virtue is the mean between vanity and humility. His deserts and his claims are alike great. For Aristotle this is "the crown of all the virtues." The account of it leaves a strange taste in the mouth of a Christian. It has been suggested lately that this was a joke of Aristotle's, but to think so makes nonsense of one whole book of the *Ethics*. The picture is indeed a naked betrayal of the self-centredness which is the bad side of Aristotle's *Ethics*.[1] "It is an anticipation of the Stoic sage without his self-abasement before the ideal of duty." Father Ronald Knox has suggested that it is a portrait of Aristotle himself.

It is the strength and the weakness of Aristotle that he is always in close touch with actual life as he knew it. His *Ethics* and *Politics*

[1] It is, perhaps, worth noticing that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are in fundamental agreement that the ultimate good for every man is his own well-being.

give us a fascinating picture of the admirations and contempts of the cultivated Athenian of Aristotle's own time. He sees the manual worker unfitted for virtue by the conditions of his life, and the slave as one who by nature can only be a means to serve another's ends, although it has been suggested that for his own age his objection to making slaves of prisoners of war may have seemed more impressive than his defence of other kinds of slavery. His political theory has the city state and its history as its background. History, indeed, and the plain man's experience of life, are always the "matter" of which his philosophy is the "form." He finds the ideal, the universal, the significant thing "shining through" the actual concrete here and now of real life. That is what makes his appeal so strong for many men in every age.

Books to Read

The best edition of Plato's *Dialogues* in English is Jowett's. The *Republic* is published in the "Everyman" Series. P. E. More's *Platonism* is reliable, complete, and readable. Professor J. A. Stewart has a masterly work on *The Myths of Plato.*

The teaching of Aristotle is admirably summarised in *Aristotle,* by W. D. Ross.

Chapter III

The Socratic Schools

THE strongest immediate influence in the world of thought was undoubtedly not that of Aristotle, but of Socrates and Plato. The three elements which were held in a not-too-consistent whole in Platonism, the identification of knowledge and virtue (with a tendency to interpret the good as the useful or even the pleasurable), an agnosticism about the ultimate nature of things, and a kind of strong religious or mystical faith, gave rise to six more or less distinct philosophical schools, each of which, isolating and over-emphasising one element in the teaching of the master, may be thought of as a philosophical *heresy*, if we think either of the root meaning of that word or of its historical use. Cyrenaics, Epicureans, Stoics, and Cynics reach their different goals from the identification of virtue and knowledge. The Pyrrhonists are pure sceptics, and the Neoplatonists (with whom we shall deal in the next

chapter) pay exclusive attention to, and in some ways misunderstand and pervert, the religious and mystical side of Platonism.

Aristippus of Cyrene went to Athens to hear Socrates, whose disciple he always claimed to be. From his birthplace the school he founded is called the Cyrenaics. He interpreted the Socratic identification of good and useful to mean that pleasure—the pleasure of the senses—is the only good. He annoyed Socrates by accepting money for his teaching, and when Dionysius presented Plato with books, Aristippus with gold, the latter said, "I need money, Plato books." His philosophy is the easiest of all. Get from each moment as it passes the pleasure that you can squeeze from it. Nothing else matters. There is nothing else, except pain. The moment that is not filled with pleasure will let in pain. He claimed to be the master, not the slave of pleasure, but if his claims were justified it was because he was different from his principles. For there is no security for man in the pleasure of the moment.

The teaching of Aristippus was developed by

a greater man, EPICURUS (341-270 B.C.). He taught in the famous Garden in Athens, and he wrote over 300 separate treatises. In him ancient materialism reaches its final form. He rejected any notion of purpose in Nature, and denied the moral government of the universe. Pleasure (at first the pleasure of the body) is the sole ultimate good, pain the sole evil. No pleasure is to be rejected except because of its painful consequences, no pain is to be chosen except as a means to greater pleasure. All the virtues are interpreted in terms of pleasure. Justice, for example, is merely a compact of expediency to prevent mutual harm. At first pleasure is a positive good to be sought, but in time the more usual advice is that the highest point of pleasure, whether in body or mind, is to be obtained by the mere removal of pain, after which pleasure admits of change but not of increase. No thorough-going hedonism, yet, has succeeded in being consistent, and Epicurus was far from it. If the *kind* of pleasure makes no difference, why does he say that it is of more account to know with whom we are to eat and drink than what we are to eat and drink? But

it is a pathetic commentary on a philosophy of pleasure that it comes to value mere absence of pain as the highest good. Surely nobody but an invalid racked with pain could have rated painlessness so high! But in an age of terror, all men wanted was peace. They lived in dread of tyrants, in dread of death, and of what might come after death. So withdrawal from the world is the true life of pleasure. Have nothing to do with ambition, keep out of politics, do not fall in love, do not become the father of a family, flee religion like the plague! How cold, how negative it all is! Epicureanism is the saddest of all European philosophies.

There never has been a school of philosophy so united, in which the teaching of the founder was so little altered by his successors, as that of Epicurus. There is no need for us to mention the name of any Epicurean, therefore, until we come to LUCRETIUS (99-55 B.C.). He has been held to be the greatest of all Roman poets. His great masterpiece is a myth of the laws of nature. He gives us a full picture of the natural science of his day, especially of its atomism, with the materialism and determinism which

were the "stuff" of the Epicurean philosophy. That picture is so shot through and unified by poetic insight that the exposition of an outworn natural science abides as an expression of human life and destiny, a sombre but dignified symbol of a philosophy in which the longing for pleasure is saved from despair by the determination of a great soul to sustain the burden of life in an age of bloodshed and civil crime. At a comparatively early age, Lucretius went mad and committed suicide. Tennyson's poem has made the story familiar.

The Cynics sought escape and security in the development of Socrates' criticism of the ideals of the average man. Knowledge and reason are to be followed, and riches, honour, power, and pleasure are to be despised. The founder of the school was ANTISTHENES (b. 440 B.C.), one of the little band who shared Socrates' last day on earth, but the most characteristic and interesting member of the school was Diogenes of Sinope (died 323 B.C.). He expressed to the full the cynic contempt for sentiment, hatred of delusion, and antagonism to the ordinary standards of life: "Remint the coinage,"

was his famous maxim, an early assertion of the transvaluation of values. He had a gift of scoffing wit, and secured himself against all loss by having nothing to lose. "He had prepared himself for every hazard of fate." He carried liberty, also, to the last point of licence. He had reverence for nobody, for nothing. He did what he liked, he said what he pleased. That is how he interpreted the great philosophical maxim, "live according to nature." Flout law and spurn custom. Many of the stories told about him seem to reveal a buffoon and a charlatan, and he must have been a most uncomfortable neighbour, and very difficult to deal with as a citizen. But for nearly seven hundred years his actions and words (legendary as well as authentic) inspired men to despise the excesses and the prizes of a vulgar and sensual society.

Stoicism was a development of the Cynical position. Zeno (336-264 B.C.) was drawn to the study of Socrates by reading the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon (which is a collection of anecdotes about the master) and Plato's *Apology* (which gives an account of the Trial of Soc-

rates). He lectured in the Stoa Porkile (hence the name of his school—the word Stoa means *porch*). In Stoicism the endurance and self-sufficiency which are certainly noticeable elements in Platonism are developed into an elaborate optimism. Obviously, if we are to have a consistent theory, a self-sufficient life must be based on the knowledge that the universe is self-sufficient, completely rational. "Could there be *Cosmos*, that wonderful, reasonable order, in him, and nothing but disorder in the world without?" All disharmony, therefore, must be explained away, and the first and most insistent is the dualism of mind and body. The Stoic, therefore, defined mind and soul in terms of matter and body. Energy and matter are but active and passive aspects of the same thing (by their mutual interaction the variety of the world has developed). This "thing" which is the fundamental substratum of the universe is fire. There have been an infinite succession of universes, and an infinite succession is to follow, each developing from simplicity to full variety, and then, as it were, returning on its tracks to its simple beginning. Fate and Provi-

dence and the sympathy of every part of the universe with every other part are due to the intimate interaction of body with body throughout the universe. When the Stoics use such words as God, Providence, Logos (or Reason) they do but describe the single materialistic substance which is the whole of things.[1]

We can appreciate, perhaps, the characteristic flavour of the Stoic pantheism if we remember St. Paul's words at Athens: "In Him we live and move and are." The Stoic view is the opposite of this. Seneca in a letter says, "God comes to men, nay! nearer still! he comes *into* men. No mind is good without God. Divine seeds are sown in human bodies." Their monism, asserting that all apparent differences represent a reality which is one and undivided, meant that even the distinctions between good and evil and between right and wrong are only appearances. It justified them, therefore, in at least a theoretical contempt for the decencies and moralities of ordinary life as thorough-go-

[1] The Pantheistic turn of later Stoicism finds expression in the well-known *Hymn to Zeus* of Cleanthes, the second master of the school.

ing as that of the Cynics. More important than that, however, is the reflection that in a determinist world the Stoic had found security, the one thing for which the ancient world longed, but the price he paid for it made any talk of freedom a mockery.

The greatest of the Stoic teachers was EPICTETUS (A.D. 50-130), a slave of Nero's freedman Epaphroditus. He was lame. Celsus, the anti-Christian, has a story. "When his master was twisting his leg, Epictetus only smiled, and said calmly, 'You will break it.' And when it was broken, 'I told you so.' Did your God [Jesus] say anything like that under torture?" He gained his freedom in some way, and taught the Stoic philosophy. Like Jesus Christ and Socrates, he wrote nothing. We have reports of his lectures in vigorous but not elegant Greek, probably verbatim, and perhaps taken down in short-hand.

By his time the materialism of the school had been softened. The primitive "stuff" of the universe had been identified with *Reason*. The system, however, was still monist, and therefore determinist. For such thinkers, of course, the

problem of evil is acute. Epictetus teaches that our character, and therefore our happiness, depends on the strength derived from resistance to opposition. The suffering which we call evil is merely the gymnastic exercise by which we attain self-mastery, and, as such, is a blessing in disguise. The theoretical problem remains, however, of how we are to reconcile a metaphysical monism, and the optimism which results from it, with the absolute ethical dualism, the distinction between right and wrong, which seemed so important to the Stoics. The solution at which they arrive is that "Good and Evil" is a subjective distinction. All things are good. It is thinking makes some of them appear ill. "My judgment"—my opinion—the way things seem to me—runs through all Epictetus' teaching like a keynote.

Certain things are ours, in our power, under our control, matters of our will and choice. Other things are not ours, beyond our power, they force themselves upon us. Our knowledge of the external world, the Stoic held, is an exact copy, so far as it goes, of that world. The impressions of the senses are beyond our control,

but the use we make of these impressions, our thoughts about them, our estimate of them and their consequences, these are in our power.

The aim of practical education is to attain what we desire, and to avoid what we dislike. The world, however, has little respect for our desires. We cannot get what we like, we have to learn, therefore, to like what we can get. The Stoic will alter himself and his desires to fit a world that he finds he can alter only a little. He must limit his desires to the few things that are subject to his control. If he is to avoid disappointment and despair he must school himself to accept whatever is as right, and learn to recognise that what does not exist cannot be desirable. The result of such discipline is tranquillity, fearlessness, *apathy* (the peculiar Stoic virtue). We must obey the law of fate, we have no option; the wise, therefore, will obey with eager willingness. Only so shall I learn to do, with due consideration and proper care, my duties to the gods, to my brother, my fatherland, to strangers. We may work for health or success, but we must not allow our peace of mind to depend on such things. We

must worship the Universal Father and Creator and love all men as our brothers, fellow-citizens of the city of God. The Stoic teaching of cosmopolitanism was the expression in speculative thought of the political conditions in which they lived. It is significant that Stoicism began in the days of Alexander, and flourished until the Northern nations were threatening the very existence of the Roman Empire. It flourished, that is to say, in a time when "nationality" was a word which had no political expression among civilised men. Their cosmopolitanism, nevertheless, was a reality, with important spiritual implications. Cicero says that the Stoics taught that even slaves and women should be philosophers.

The names of each of our relations to others —father, son, citizen, ruler—suggest the acts appropriate to that relationship. Right conduct is determined by a man's relation with other men. It is our duty to love others, according to their relation to us, but we must not allow our love to infringe our liberty or break our inward peace. The relations of life are ephemeral, and beyond our control. This

brings us face to face with the contradiction which Stoicism never succeeded in solving, that the highest good for man coincides with his own advantage and yet that men are bound together in one community as children of God.

They also found that the more they emphasised the unity and determinism of the word, the more unreal man's liberty became. The typical Stoic view comes to be that our freedom is our power to check (not, finally, to refuse, but only to suspend) our assent to the seductiveness of things. The root of sin and moral evil is forgetfulness of the difference between what is within my power and what is beyond my control.

Epictetus has a *religious* sense of the nearness of God. "What else can a lame old man like me do but chant the praise of God? . . . As I am a rational creature I must praise God." Seneca may have been influenced by the writings of St. Paul, and is quoted by the Council of Trent as if he were an authority. But the God whom they praise is only the ground of the universe, His Providence is only another name for a universal mechanical law, and man's

personality is as shadowy as that of God. The Stoic philosophy is, at the heart, sad and pessimistic; it ends in despair. "Bear" and "Forbear" it says, and if the world press you too hard, there is the way of escape. When victory is impossible and defeat is certain—"the door is open." Stoicism preached the legitimacy of suicide—a doctrine all the more bleak because they thought the door was open to nothingness. There is no immortality.

The Stoic ideal took flesh and came to life in the Roman Emperor, MARCUS AURELIUS (A.D. 180). He is Plato's dream come true, the dream of a philosopher king, of a ruler who would prefer not to govern. "Even in a palace life may be lived well," he says. He turned from comfort and pleasure and sought only virtue. In his days plague and famine and foreign and civil wars made problems enough for a ruler, and trials to test the philosophic calm of one who believed in, and aimed at, self-control, but the Stoic Emperor bore himself nobly and well, and his *Meditations* show that the bulwarks of his spirit were never overthrown. His life, as well as his writing, broadened and hu-

manised Stoicism. The claims of natural affection occupy a large place in his book. For him the brotherhood of man, the citizenship of the world, were warm realities rather than cold abstractions; the common good, and nothing else, is the private advantage which a man ought to seek, and to pity and forgive one's enemies is a luxury to be prized. "The best way of revenge is not to imitate the injury." He will not expect gratitude, or make any parade of virtue. There is no need to grieve because there is no immortality; let us live this life well, if we have no other. His wisdom has never lost its appeal, and never will, for it has little that is local or passing about it, and it appeals to men of widely different temperaments.

Scepticism is related to an obvious element in the Socratic philosophy, although it has also its relations with the teaching of Democritus. The founder of ancient Scepticism was PYRRHO. His most characteristic sayings were, "No more" (*i.e.*, no more this than that); "I decide nothing;" and "Balance" (of evidence and views). He appealed to the consciousness of ignorance which is common to men. He seems

to have held that we have no means of knowing whether our sensations, and opinions correspond to the nature of things. We can, therefore, do nothing but hold our judgment in suspense. We cannot know what is, and what is not. The result of this conviction is the care-free, indifferent state of mind which some call tranquillity. Once, at sea, when the passengers were much alarmed by very rough weather, Pyrrho pointed to a little pig that went on eating through it all. That, he said, ought to be the tranquillity of the wise man.

The aim of the Sceptics was to live in a world of facts, and the only facts beyond dispute are immediate and present sensations, images, and thoughts. Science is possible because simultaneity and succession are matters of immediate experience. Beyond that we cannot go. Everything that men claim to know is either self-evident or proved from something else. The disagreement about what is self-evident proves that nothing is in fact self-evident. The attempt to prove something from something else either brings you to something which claims to be self-evident or leads to an endless succession.

Knowledge is impossible, therefore. So far as conduct is concerned, the sceptic can find nothing more certain than the customs and beliefs in which he has been brought up. The whole sceptical thought of the four previous centuries was gathered and arranged by Sextus Empiricus, who lived between A.D. 150 and 230.

Books to Read

W. Pater: *Marius the Epicurean.*
E. A. Abbott: *Philochristus.*
Edwyn Bevan: *Stoics and Sceptics.*
There are many cheap editions of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius.

Chapter IV

Neoplatonism and the Christian Fathers

NEOPLATONISM began in the third century after Christ, and lasted until the public teaching of pagan philosophy was forbidden by Justinian in 529. Although in one sense it is not original, for we can trace the various doctrines of this school in earlier thinkers, as a system it is the work of one man. PLOTINUS (204-270) was a pupil at Alexandria of Ammonius Saccas, a self-taught mystic who was also the teacher of Origen. He went to Persia with the Emperor Gordian in order to acquaint himself with Eastern thought. For the last twenty-five years of his life he taught philosophy in Rome. He never mentions Christianity. Almost certainly he was of those who, disliking the gloomy scorn of the old culture shown by some Christians, opposed the new religion as an enemy of the real values of civilisation. His philosophy, at any rate, became

the rallying-point for the last stand of paganism. It used to be said that he imported Oriental elements into Western thinking, but it is now generally agreed that his system is the logical culmination of the Greek tradition.

Plotinus takes up the distinctively religious element in Plato's teaching, what has been called the "spiritual affirmation," as distinct from the scepticism and rationalistic hedonism. Mysticism in the technical sense of the word, as implying immediate communion with God, rather than a conviction of His existence reached by argument, and a contemplation of the Divine Being which reaches its consummation in a trance, is more prominent in Plotinus than in Plato, and so is asceticism. There was no distrust of reason, or attempt to substitute feeling, but a union of mysticism and reason. "In Plotinus," Dean Inge says, "the fusion of religion, ethics, and metaphysics was almost complete." Neoplatonism has been described as a religion without sacraments or ritual, but, as in the case of the Emperor Julian, it may, for many of its adherents, have been the esoteric side of the religion which found ecclesiastical

and liturgical expression in the "Mysteries" of Mithra.

As we have seen, the dualism of Plato, with its absolute distinction between the world of appearance and the real world of Ideas, corresponding in the knower to the distinction between opinion or the experience of the senses and knowledge, became much less absolute in Aristotle, and disappeared, in the Epicureans and Stoics, in a somewhat crude materialism. Plotinus, also, rejects dualism (some recent authorities have made the paradoxical claim, on this ground, that the root influence in his system is Aristotle rather than Plato!), but for him the reality of the world is spiritual and perfect. This ultimate unity, the One, the Absolute, the Good, is completely transcendent and ineffable. All that is exists by procession from Him, and He permeates all existence, spiritual and material, by His activity. He is manifested in Intelligence, which is the "Second God" and contains the active Forms or Ideas, and in the "World Soul," which is the "Third God" and the immediate creator of the material world. This Neoplatonic Trinity is

hardly comparable to the Christian Trinity. It is almost certainly not borrowed from, or influenced by, Christian ideas; its "three" are in no sense Persons; they are not equal and co-eternal, the second and third "gods" in the Neoplatonic Trinity being manifestations of the first. It is, in fact, strictly a Duality rather than a Trinity, with closer resemblances to Hegelianism than to Catholicism.

Plotinus arrives at the thought of God negatively. Every attribute that we apply to God, he holds, is really a limitation of Him, and He is infinite. We cannot say that God is good or just or loving. We must remove all attributes until only God is left. He is beyond thought, therefore He is unknowable. We cannot even say that He is real, since that also would imply a limitation of the Absolute. It is strangely like the Brahmin teaching about God, but it is even more like agnosticism wrapped up in fine words. Looked at as the product of a logical process, the Neoplatonist thought of God is an empty abstraction; for if we remove all attributes from any being, it is difficult to see how what is left can be distinguished from nothing.

From this unreality Plotinus himself was saved by his mysticism. God, for him, was not merely the conclusion of an argument, He was chiefly the object of an experience. Four times in his life he attained to the realised union with the Absolute which is the crowning summit of the Mystic Way. This transcendental experience he fails, of course, to describe—as do all the Mystics; but his attempts to describe it are remarkable both for sanity and insight. "Consciousness of the One comes," he says, "by an actual Presence superior to any knowing. The Supreme is absent except only to those that are prepared to receive it, those that have wrought themselves to harmony with It, that have seized It and hold It by virtue of their own likeness to It and by the power in themselves akin to the power which rays from It . . . when we behold It, then we obtain the end of our wishes, and rest. In this plunging into the Divine, the soul finds itself" (for Plotinus, "upward" and "inward" are the same); "when it is the Divine it is truly itself, no longer a thing among things. When the image has returned to the original, the journey is finished. This is the life of

God-like men, a life without love of the world, a flight of the Alone to the Alone." The writings of Plotinus, the *Enneads*, have been called "The Bible of Western Mysticism."

Every spiritual monism is faced with the problem of explaining how and why the Eternal and Perfect Absolute gives rise to a world of time and change and imperfection and evil. Plotinus teaches that "creation" is an eternal, timeless relation between the world and God. God is the necessary condition without which the world could not exist, but the world is not necessary to God; the Absolute would be perfect even though the world and the time process did not exist. Plotinus assumes that an effect is always less perfect than its cause. Existence, therefore, is a gradation, a descending scale, becoming less and less perfect. Every value that exists in the world exists more perfectly in God, but God is not perfectly mirrored in the created world. The world obtains redemption in so far as it identifies itself with Him. It is significant that the last words of Plotinus were, "I strive to render up the Divine in myself to the Divine in the All." This is an attempt to

show *how* the imperfect exists in relation to the perfect, but it does not explain *why* there is imperfection; still less does it explain positive evil. For Plotinus, the source of evil is the self-assertion which divides the individual soul from other souls and from God. The ultimate cause of division, however, for all Platonists, is matter. So we find that Plotinus sometimes identifies Evil with Matter, which is the furthest from God of the series of emanations which is the created universe. It is evil because it is the complete privation of reality or unity. So, elsewhere, we find matter described as pure possibility of being, mere nothingness, and identified with primitive evil, the limit beyond which there cannot be anything less perfect. Degrees of value and degrees of reality exactly correspond. Evil as such has no place in reality.

Several of the successors of Plotinus were men of great ability. Porphyry wrote his biography. Proclus' *Elements of Theology* was a great sourcebook of mediæval speculation. Mr. Whittaker has published, recently, an interesting account of Macrobius. Dean Inge is cer-

tainly right, however, when he says that "After Porphyry there were more sound philosophers in the Church than in the pagan schools." The permanent importance of Plotinus is that he showed once for all the futility of trying to explain the mental or spiritual in terms of the material or spatial; the anti-materialist tradition in European philosophy has fed on his teaching. Eucken has said that Plotinus has influenced Christianity more than any other thinker, and there are few more fascinating pursuits in the history of thought than the tracing of that influence. Read in a Latin translation, Plotinus was one of the chief influences in the conversion of St. Augustine. Through his disciple, Proclus, he proved the main speculative impulse in the thought of that mysterious person Dionysius the Areopagite, and through him, as well as through St. Augustine, he became the teacher of St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas. A collection of extracts from Plotinus was known in the Middle Ages under the title *Theologia Aristotelis*, was much studied by Arab and Jewish thinkers, and through them influenced the later scholastics and Malebranche

and Spinoza. Very much of later Christian thought, therefore, shows traces of Neoplatonism. It is interesting, however, to recall the fact that at first they were bitterly opposed. Porphyry's attack on Catholicism is as definite, though neither so brilliant nor so famous, as that of Celsus in the previous century. As St. Augustine points out, the fundamental cause of conflict was the Incarnation, which was never really acceptable to Greek thought.

A forerunner alike of Plotinus and of the Christian Platonists of Alexandria was PHILO the Jew (30 B.C.-A.D. 50). It is impossible to say whether they were indebted to him, directly or indirectly, for it is uncertain whether he had any Gentile readers or not. He held the Old Testament to be infallible, and by an allegorising interpretation of it he showed that Platonism, as he understood it, is an imperfect and incomplete version of Scripture truth. God, he taught, is entirely transcendent, inconceivable, and ineffable, and there is a complete dualism between God and the world. The world has not been created out of nothing, but is the result of divine action on a previously existing

"unformed" matter. This action takes place by means of a number of mediatorial powers, the most important of which is the Logos. Philo is not clear, however, as to whether the Logos is personal or not.

Another collection of writings whose influence has, almost certainly, been exaggerated is that known by the name of "Thrice great Hermes" (HERMES TRISMEGISTUS). The generation before this one held that they were a pre-Christian link in a chain of secret wisdom that joined Noah and Moses to Plato and modern theosophy! It is now clear, however, that they date from the latter half of the third century of our era, and that their philosophy is that blend of Stoicism and Platonism which first made its claim to be the true interpretation of the Dialogues about the time of Cicero. They teach the dualism between the eternal world of reality and the world of mere appearance with a curiously material way of interpreting the "spiritual" reality, and a superstitious application of astrology to the temporal world (both these points have affinities with the Stoics). They preach a doctrine of salvation

which has resemblances to Neoplatonism, but is entirely different from that of the Catholic Church, for it knows nothing of sacraments or of the grace of God. No Christian influences are to be found in Hermes, and it is not probable that there is any reference to Christianity, although there are recognisable allusions to some of the best-known passages in the Old Testament. And there is no evidence, as there is no likelihood, that Hermes had any influence on Christian thought, although it may have been the root of Manichaeanism. The Neoplatonists never attached any importance to this literature, although Porphyry refers to its existence.

St. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) was the first of the Christian Platonists of Alexandria. He contrasted the clearness and certainty of the Scriptures with the guesses of the poets and philosophers. He recognises, however, that what the law was to the Jews, philosophy was for the Greeks, a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. What was well said in the one was as truly revealed as the other. In the true Platonist tradition, he stresses the

transcendence of God, "above even the One." His account of the Second Person of the Trinity is derived entirely from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. Like the Stoics, he values "apathy," freedom from the passions, very highly. The Gospel makes the true Gnostic, or perfect Christian philosopher, whose goal is that immortality which in Greek thought was described as "becoming a God." While the Greeks make the gods in their own likeness, however, the true worshipper of God seeks to attain to the likeness of the Son of God. Knowledge of God and Godlikeness go together. The tradition of the Church is the ultimate authority for truth. He held the intellectualist view of sin that we have seen in Socrates, and he made faith dependent on knowledge and the good life.

St. Clement was a Greek, born in Athens, and a "man of letters," and much of the attractiveness of his writings is due to his wit and style. ORIGEN (185-254), his pupil in theology as he was of Ammonius "the Porter" in philosophy, was a native Egyptian or Copt, and he makes his impression by the width of

his learning and the solidity of his thought. He is the first great philosophical theologian of the Christian Church, much influenced by the Stoics, a little, at first hand, by Plato, and hardly at all by Aristotle. Dean Inge says, "He destroyed Gnosticism by giving the Church a Christian Platonism." His doctrine of God is that He is above and beyond all being, but he differs from the Neoplatonists by declaring that He has the "passion" of Love. That is why He must reveal Himself, and hence the Creation and the Incarnation. The Word is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father. Origen, much more than St. Clement, distinguishes between the eternal attributes of the Son, and those which He assumed at His Incarnation. The Holy Ghost is associated in honour and dignity and worship with the other Persons of the Trinity, and belief in Him is the distinguishing prerogative of Christians. God eternally reveals Himself; although this world had a beginning, there has been a series of creations without beginning, the object of God's self-revelation. The soul of man has fallen into the material world through sin; this

life is a sort of purgatorial suffering, the result of the errors of a former life. The Son took a real human body and a real human soul, He really suffered, to deliver us. After death the good will be purified by sufferings, the wicked, and even the devils, will be purified by the fires of hell. The whole creation will at last return to the perfection of God, and the end will be as the beginning. There are obvious similarities between the teaching of Origen and that of the Neoplatonists, but there are also differences. His teaching aroused suspicion and opposition in Catholic circles. He was condemned by his own bishop, and also, in 231, by Pope Pontianus, but this was more for ecclesiastical irregularities than for proved heresy. Later Christian teachers have expounded the characteristic ideas of Origen, and have not been condemned.

The full influence of Neoplatonism, however, entered the Catholic Church in the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430). He read Plotinus and Porphyry in the Latin versions of Marius Victorinus, and the study of those writers, as much as any influence, led him to Christ.

St. Ambrose of Milan, to whose friendship the conversion of St. Augustine was directly due, had been influenced by the Neoplatonic revival of idealism, and to the end the thought of St. Augustine shared many of the characteristic ideas of that school. It is important to recognise, however, that he is essentially a profound and original thinker, who is misunderstood if he is thought of as mainly dependent on his predecessors. It is improbable that he knew the writings of Plato and Aristotle at first hand, although he speaks highly of Plato, and his physics rests on a theory of matter and form which recalls that of Aristotle. He has been compared to Plato in the rich suggestiveness of his thought as well as in the eloquent beauty of its expression.

The philosophy of St. Augustine centres, consciously and emphatically, round the thought of God. Philosophy is the love of God. Intellectualism and mysticism are married in his system, reason and tradition are complementary sources of authority. Faith serves reason, and reason helps faith. Reason lends its authority to faith, but there are many revealed truths

which reason alone could not discover. His mysticism is fundamentally Christian, rather than Neoplatonic; it keeps all his thought in touch with religious reality, and provides for the Middle Ages, and for modern Christianity, a powerful corrective, on the one hand to the pantheism into which Neoplatonism so easily degenerates, and on the other to the word-chopping rationalism which is the besetting sin of Aristotelians.

St. Augustine makes important contributions to thought in the three departments of metaphysics, psychology, and ethics. In metaphysics, he is, in Eucken's well-known phrase, "the single great philosopher on the basis of Christianity proper that the world has had." It is not too much to say that St. Anselm's Ontological argument [1] and Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* [2] would hardly have been possible without St. Augustine's work in philosophy and psychology. As opposed to the Neoplatonists, he defends the theory of a creation in time, but, agreeing with them, he emphasises the unity,

[1] See below, p. 97.
[2] See below, pp. 121, 122.

transcendence, and incomprehensibility of God. He does not follow Plotinus, however, in arguing that the transcendent God must be unconscious. God conceived the universe before creating it, and there is a Divine idea corresponding to, and the source of, each contingent thing. It is because all things have their source in Divine Ideas that they are intelligible and our knowledge is certain. These Augustinian "Ideas," of course, are very different from the Platonic general classes, and from the inferior emanations from the One Essence which Plotinus called "Ideas."

St. Augustine gave all his efforts to know, only and fully, God and the soul. His powers of psychological analysis were unique. The soul, he held, is spiritual and immortal, but he has no fixed opinion as to its origin. The soul makes use of the body, and governs it. The will has a primacy of honour over the intellect, and is psychologically and morally free. There are wide differences of opinion, among students of St. Augustine, as to how he reconciled human free will with Divine Grace and Predestination. God, he taught, is the supreme end of

man, and union with God is the soul's greatest happiness. Like the Neoplatonists, he held that evil has no real existence; everything is good so far as it has being.

St. Augustine is of first-rate importance as an ethical and political thinker. Up to his time, Christian ethics were almost entirely dependent on Stoicism. He provided for those who came after him a Christian, religious, system, in which man's freedom and God's grace are fundamental. His books, and especially the *City of God*, may be said to have created the ideal of the Holy Roman Empire. The political theory of the Middle Ages quotes no writer more often than St. Augustine, and his is the first name, since St. Paul, in the story of a Christian philosophy of history.

Books to Read

W. R. Inge: *The Philosophy of Plotinus.*
E. R. Dodds: *Select Passages Illustrating Neoplatonism* (translated).
P. E. More: *Hellenistic Philosophies.*
T. Whittaker: Macrobius, or Philosophy, Science and Letters in the year 400.
St. Augustine: *Confessions; The City of God.*

Chapter V

The Middle Ages

THE sack of Rome by Alaric in 410, and the death of St. Augustine in 430, mark the beginning of the Dark Ages. For nearly five hundred years civilisation was on the defensive, and could hardly save the remnants of classical culture from the flood of barbarism. Nothing would have remained, if it had not been for Christian scholars. The early Middle Ages (up to the beginning of the thirteenth century) are entirely indebted to the Church for their knowledge of ancient thought. It was a time, not of original thinkers, but of disciples and commentators. Collections of extracts from classical authors, culled from St. Augustine and other Christian Fathers, and Latin translations of two simpler parts of Aristotle's *Organon*, form the substance of such culture as the times could boast.

The first notable name of the period is Boethius (480-525), a minister of Theoderic

the Goth, who, after an undeserved disgrace, wrote in prison an ethical treatise called *The Consolations of Philosophy*. He was nominally a Christian, although his execution can hardly be called a Christian martyrdom, but his book represents rather the Platonic and Stoic than the Christian attitude towards life. He was steeped in the culture of the ancients. Of equal importance with this book, for the philosophical instruction of the coming time, were Boethius' Latin translations (with his own comments) of Porphyry's *Isagoge* or "Introduction," and of Aristotle's *Categories* and *Perihermenias* ("on Interpretation"). Down to the end of the twelfth century his translations were the chief source of the knowledge of Aristotle, whose superior he was often held to be. Much influence, especially on mystical thought and speculation, was exerted by the writings of an author whose pseudonym was DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE (the convert of St. Paul mentioned in Acts xvii.), who was probably a contemporary of Boethius. He wrote in Greek, but his writings were translated into Latin at the express command of Charles

the Bald, as the *Consolation of Philosophy* was translated into West Saxon by King Alfred. The Pseudo-Dionysius was "probably a monk, possibly a bishop, certainly an ecclesiastic of some sort." His writings were eagerly welcomed in England. They are a strange blending of Neoplatonism and Christianity. They express the idea of the transcendent God in the most uncompromising language. God as revealed in creation is only an appearance of the Super-Personal God, who is beyond all distinctions of what is and what is not, what exists and what does not exist, beyond the distinction between the knower and the known. What modern philosophers mean by the Absolute is very much what Dionysius meant by the super-essential God. It is at least doubtful whether his doctrine of the Trinity is orthodox. He holds that the "Persons" of the Trinity are themselves infinite, and therefore super-personal. The names of the three Persons express actual distinctions in the eternally manifested Godhead, but "behind" these manifestations is the super-essential reality. All finite things proceed from the Divine goodness and love, as

light streams forth from the sun. Between God and man there is a hierarchy of celestial spirits, of which the ecclesiastical hierarchy is an imperfect copy. In so far as things exist, they are good; nothing is inherently bad. Evil is non-existent, but it annihilates that with which it is involved. Evil in the world is really a tendency of things towards nothingness. Dionysius tends to under-estimate the importance of particular evils and actual sins, which on their own level are real enough, by describing them as merely finite appearances of what in reality is good, and, therefore, he does not make the Cross of Christ so central for his thought as it must be for any philosophy which is adequately Christian. As God is the origin of all things so, he teaches, God is the end and goal of all things. He draws all creation to Himself. All things are ever becoming God, being deified. In a contemplation in which the "this" and the "that," the "knower" and the "known," meet in an ecstasy which is beyond knowledge, the mystic is rapt into the experience of that unity.

John Scot Eriugena (800-877), who

translated the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius into Latin, was an Irishman, himself a philosopher and mystic, a deep thinker and powerful personality, and one of the most striking figures in the thought of the early Middle Ages. He had worked out a complete philosophical system. Unlike almost all the scholars and thinkers of his time, he could read Greek. From one point of view, his system can be viewed as an interpretation of the Areopagite in terms of a more thorough-going pantheism. This is why it is unsatisfactory to call Eriugena the first of the scholastics, as many historians have done, for no true scholastic was a pantheist. Otherwise, we may say that he reconstructed Neoplatonism for himself (there is no evidence that he had ever read Plotinus), attempting to identify it with Catholicism. That he did not succeed completely is proved by the condemnation of his teaching by the Church. It should be remembered, however, that his teaching was much misunderstood, and that both in philosophy and in theology he has been accused of teaching exactly opposite to what he really believed. It is not without justification, however,

that he has been called the *enfant terrible* of his time.

There is, he taught, only one Being, God, who is all that is. Other types of being are manifestations of Him. Creation, in so far as that word can be rightly used, is a self-revelation of the principle of all things to the intelligence which is itself divine; it is the thinking out of a thought. All existences are in God, and are emanations from Him. The Divine Nature "is" in four successive stages. First, the Deity in His original and unknowable being, God the Father, Whom no man can know, Who does not even know Himself, Nature uncreated and creating. Secondly, God the Son, seeing in Himself the rational ideas which are the original causes of the world of time and change, Whose being is in and through this self-knowledge, Nature created and creating. Then God as realised and existing in time and space, the fundamental causes externalised in genera, species, and individuals, nature created but not creating; all finite, contingent substances, material and spiritual, being *theophanies*, manifestations of God the Holy Ghost.

And, lastly, as all creation comes from God, it moves towards, and returns to, the perfection of God. At last the universe will move to That from Which it came forth, until God is All and in All. This consummation will, however, not be an undifferentiated monotony, but a harmony, in which, though personal qualities and individual life be lost, all things enter into real existence.

God is immanent in creation, which has no being except as His manifestation. Creation and revelation are the same thing. No finite attribute can be ascribed to God, but in the created universe we get a real, though partial, revelation of God. Man is a projection of God. The Divine Mind thinks in man. Reason, therefore, is the sole authority for human knowledge and thought, and there is no limit to its authority. Since God alone is real, and everything else real only so far as it partakes of the Divine Nature, evil as such is mere appearance, and the annihilation of evil is the clearing away of intellectual or spiritual obscurity. But Eriugena finds it impossible to deal with sin without assuming its reality. In many

ways, as a thinker, he resembles Origen and, like his great predecessor, his treatment of Christian doctrine is sometimes very free indeed. He treats dogma as a symbolic approximation to truth.

We have seen that Eriugena is not rightly called the founder of scholasticism. That great mediæval movement began in the monastery schools, like that in which Alcuin was taught at York in the eighth century, and those founded by Charles the Great under his inspiration. The teacher in such a school was called *Doctor Scholasticus*, and the characteristic scholastic method of exposition was elaborated, first in dialogues between teacher and pupil, and later in the debates in which a candidate for a degree undertook to defend a chosen thesis against all comers. In the golden age of the schoolmen, in the thirteenth century, the complete method was this: first, to propose a question; then to state various arguments pointing to a solution opposite to your own; then to give your own solution; and, finally, to demolish the opposing arguments. The discussions of the schoolmen are related to the interests of ancient philoso-

phy by a sentence in Porphyry's *Isagoge*, which had been translated by Boethius. "Now concerning genera and species, whether they be substances or mere concepts of the mind; and if substances, whether they be corporeal or incorporeal, and whether they exist apart from sensible things or in and about sensible things, all this I will decline to say." This raises the whole question of Ideas, as Plato calls them, or Universals, to use Aristotle's description, and it divided the Christian philosophers of Europe into two camps until the fourteenth century. Those who hold that species and genera are only names are called Nominalists, but those who believed that universals have, in some sense, real existence are called Realists.[1] Extreme nominalism is the belief that the universal is a mere name and nothing more; it is probable, however, that no mediæval philosopher accepted this view. Moderate nominalism held that the universal is a concept of the mind which signifies a plurality of particular things.

[1] The beginner should be careful not to confuse the mediæval Realists with a widely different school of modern thinkers who are called by the same name.

The universal is the concept wherein intelligence grasps the common attributes in different things, and raises them into a true notion. Although it is not easy to relate mediæval thinking to modern thinking (Father Joseph Rickaby says, "The gauge on which the mediæval mind ran was not our gauge. Which of the two is broad, and which is narrow, we need not argue; anyhow the gauge is different, and the passage of the train of thought from the one to the other is a troublesome operation"), it seems probable that the moderate nominalism or conceptualism of the schoolmen was in many ways closely similar to modern idealism. Moderate realism was, as a matter of fact, very close to moderate nominalism. Abailard, for example, is called a conceptualist or nominalist by some writers, and a realist by others. However that may be, moderate realism is the doctrine that universals have a real existence, independent of the mind which "thinks" them. The universal is found in the individual things which exist, and is differentiated in each of them. Paul's humanity is different from Peter's, and Peter's is different from John's. Everything that ex-

ists is individual. The universal is multiplied with the multiplication of individuals. The ultra-realists, or Platonic realists, held that the idea is universal and one; it is prior, both logically and in time, to the sensible things which it describes. The truest and highest realities are neither individual, nor perceived by the senses; they are universal forms, and are recognised by the reason.

The earliest schoolmen whose works are extant were realists; it is only in the period of the decay of scholasticism that nominalism is upheld by thinkers of the front rank. The modern reader may be tempted to underestimate the importance and reality of the controversy. On the one side, we must recognise that realism was concerned to defend a real unity of mankind, and the primacy of human reason; it stood opposed to the kind of false individualism which justifies the most ruthless kind of selfishness, and despises all such expressions of humanity as a League of Nations; it related a rational philosophy and theology to Christian experience. Nominalism, on the other hand, with its emphasis on the reality and importance

of individual persons and particular things, its satisfaction with the unique and the concrete, defended the actualities of art and religion and life against the rigid schemes of determinism. It stood for freedom and providence. But it tended to make mysticism, uncriticised, individual religious experience, a substitute for, rather than a companion and partner with, rational thinking.

The last of the Fathers, the first of the schoolmen, was St. Anselm (1033-1109). He played a great part in the history of the relation between Church and State in England, and his theology is a wonderful example of how feudalism looks when it is imported into the sphere of religion. But these matters are outside our present interest. He seeks, in all his philosophy of religion, to satisfy reason. *Credo ut intelligam*, he says; if I do not believe, I shall not understand. Faith must be perfected by a rational study of the doctrines of revelation. He tries to base the doctrine of the Trinity on pure reason, and also the Incarnation. But all knowledge, he holds, must rest on faith. (This question of the relation of faith or au-

thority to reason was one of the great problems discussed by all the schoolmen.) Anselm's great contribution to thought, however, is the *ontological argument* for the existence of God. The argument is that if we really understand the word "God" we shall see at once that such a Being must exist. It is developed in the *Proslogion* in this form. The word "God" signifies that than which nothing greater can be conceived. But a nature which is of this kind is a necessarily existing nature. For were it to exist only in the mind, we could conceive something greater, namely, a nature so great as not merely to exist in the mind, but to demand real existence as well (or, to have the additional perfection, that it cannot be excluded from existence). God, therefore, exists.

Anselm's ontological argument was not generally accepted. It was early pointed out that the idea of existence is not at all the same thing as the existence of an idea. I have an idea of one hundred pounds in my pocket book. I now add to it the thought that the one hundred pounds really exist in my pocket book (an addition which is not so easy to make in thought

as some people have seemed to think). But my belief in their existence does not make them exist. Anselm's reply to that kind of argument was that there is all the difference between the eternally necessary idea, the greatest conceivable thing, and any particular idea of things which had a beginning, and will have an end. It is part of the definition of God that He is necessarily existent, self-caused, eternal. We are, then, shut up to this alternative. Either the very notion of God involves a contradiction in terms, or He must exist. Either God is necessarily non-existent, or He is necessarily existent. If God is possible, He exists.

This argument was too Platonist to be accepted by the schoolmen, with the exception of Duns Scotus. It was upheld in various forms by Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Hegel (a very impressive list of names). The most effective critic of this, as of all the rational arguments for the existence of God, was Immanuel Kant.

There is no space to say more of the rest of Anselm's philosophy than to mention two points. He held that our knowledge of truth

is the accurate perception of the ideas in the mind of God which are the patterns according to which things have been created. It is to think God's thoughts after Him. And he taught that free-will is more, and more important, than the mere power to choose indifferently between two alternatives, it is rather the power to do what is right for its own sake.

The second great schoolman is one of the most tragic figures in the history of thought, Master Peter Abailard (1079-1142). His life and his heresies are not our present concern. He was religious in his way, a cold, dry way, but his chief interest was in dialectic. The eldest son of a noble Breton family, he gave up his right of succession to devote himself to philosophy. He preferred the strife of disputation to the trophies of war. The root of his system is that a doctrine is not believed merely because God has said it, but because we are convinced by reason that it is so. This appeal to reason was condemned by the Synod of Soissons in 1121. He argued that reason is of God and had, as philosophy showed, found God. His appeal to reason

against authority was rash and premature, but, in spite of his excesses, he secured the recognition of philosophy as a separate and distinct branch of study, independent of theology. He himself always maintained that he was the devoted son of the Church, and in his last letter to Héloïse he had pleaded: "I would not be an Aristotle, if this should keep me away from Christ." Many of the views of Abailard which were condemned were set forth in a work called *Sic et Non* (Yes and No), containing opinions "pro" and "con" on all the disputed theological questions of the day, culled from the Fathers. A work of his pupil, however, Peter Lombard, the famous *Sentences*, which was largely *Sic et Non* in a more reverent and tactful form, became an accredited text-book of orthodox theology during the later Middle Ages. We must not forget, also, that although Abailard so appealed to reason, and believed in doubt as a method, he owned that the highest truths of theology stand above logical proof; they can only be illustrated by analogies; but through knowledge faith is made perfect.

Abailard's chief contribution to philosophy

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is the defining of a mediating position between Realism and Nominalism. He agreed with his first teacher, Roscellinas, a nominalist, in denying that universals have substantial reality, apart from the mind. But he agreed also with the realists that universals have a certain reality, for when the mind recognises the common qualities of different things, and states its recognition in a name, it is bringing a natural predicate to the front. The universal belongs to the nature of things. Authorities differ as to whether his system is to be called realism or nominalism.

If Abailard may be held, in many respects, to be before his time, he was opposed by one who represented the conservative point of view at its best and most respectable. St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was energetic, fearless, with an extraordinary personal magnetism and power of ruling men, devoutly religious, and a zealous reformer of monastic life. He was the centre of the reactionary opposition to Abailard. He could not be fair to new ways of thinking. For him, the ultimate authority lay not in reason, but in religious ex-

perience. The supreme object of life is the love of God. He was one of the greatest of Christian mystics. On the speculative side he depended almost entirely on St. Augustine and indirectly, therefore, on Neoplatonism. But his chief contribution lay in recalling the Christian soul to the devout contemplation of Christ, its Bridegroom. A highly emotional and even erotic vocabulary became part of the ordinary use of religion, largely through its influence.

Scholasticism up till the second half of the twelfth century made use of Plato and Aristotle, but knew little of either, and misunderstood both. The end of that century, however, marks the beginning of a new phase in philosophy, through a much wider and more accurate knowledge, particularly of Aristotle. The Crusades, and the struggle with Muhammedanism in the Near East and in Spain, made European scholars acquainted with the thought of Islam, and, in particular, with the commentaries on Aristotle of the great Arabic scholars, Ibn-Roschd the Moor and Ibn-Sina the Persian (whose names were Latinised as Averroës and Avicenna!). These were very far from being

orthodox, from the Catholic point of view. Averroës, for example, denied individual immortality, and both thinkers were inclined to pantheism. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, new and better translations of the works of Aristotle were made from the Arabic, followed by translations direct from the Greek. These provided thinkers with much new material, and if the old problems were still discussed, they emerged on a higher level, and with a richer content.

The great names in thirteenth-century scholasticism, and by general consent scholasticism reached its highest point at that time, are two Dominican friars, ALBERT OF COLOGNE, afterwards called "the Great" (1193-1280), and his pupil ST. THOMAS AQUINAS (1227-1274), the greatest of all Christian theologians, on whose thought the Western Church still lives, and proposes to live, after six centuries. Albert's chief work was to paraphrase and comment on Aristotle; St. Thomas accomplished the tremendous task of a reconciliation and intimate alliance between the received Christian view of life, as it had been handed down to

him, and the recently recovered Aristotelianism. It is difficult to conceive what a swirl and whirl of thought was produced in Christian philosophy by men coming new to the study of the Stagirite. There was much wild and erratic speculation; pantheism and materialism (sometimes united) were attractive and novel; and Aristotle was forbidden as an anti-Christian writer. It was only after a long struggle that Aristotelianism was captured for the Church (some Anti-Roman Platonists may say that the Church was captured for Aristotelianism). Be that as it may, in 1253 two chairs of Aristotelian philosophy were set up, under Papal authority, in the University of Paris.

The chief task of Aquinas, then, was the problem of the relation between philosophy and theology, or between reason and revelation. Theology or revelation was for him the complete dogmatic system of the Church, largely imbued with Platonism, and accepted as infallibly true. Philosophy or reason was the speculative teaching of Aristotle, which commended itself to his reason as true. The Gentiles, in reply to whom he wrote his great philosophical

work, *Summa contra Gentiles*, are not Gentiles or unbelievers in general, but, although this is not always realised, the Muhammedan commentators on Aristotle, Averroës and Avicenna. His task was to Christianise Aristotle by introducing the belief in creation and immortality into the system, and to show that the physics of Aristotle may be accepted, and that not only do the great truths of Christianity remain unshaken, but that the philosophy of Aristotle provides a natural foundation and buttress for the truths of revelation. Aristotelianism was so perfectly assimilated that it reorganised itself in the sense of Christian thought.

Aquinas is quite clear as to the relation between Reason and Faith. They cannot contradict each other, for Reason comes from God, and Faith comes from God. They cannot ignore each other, for whereas Faith puts us in possession of truths which are necessary to our salvation, although Reason unaided could not arrive at them, it is the part of Reason to explain and illustrate these truths, and to refute so-called rational arguments against them. As Cardinal Newman put it, "the function of Rea-

son in matters of Faith is to remove the difficulties which Reason itself has created." But Reason and Faith must not be confused. Reason trusts to argument (ultimately, of course, to the Law of Contradiction); so soon as it begins to accept any other method of proof, it ceases to be Reason. Faith trusts to authority; so soon as it abandons authority for reasoning, it ceases to believe, it knows. St. Thomas believes in a theology which is nothing but theology, and a philosophy which is nothing but philosophy. He accepts both, and demands that each should be free and master in its own sphere. In theology, God comes first, and all things are derived from Him; in philosophy, God comes last, and all things lead up to Him. Theology is concerned with man's salvation, and it is interested in truth only so far as knowledge of it is necessary for that salvation; philosophy is interested in truth for its own sake.

Aquinas' great philosophical work, the *Summa contra Gentiles*, is a reply to opponents who recognise neither the authority of the Sacred Scripture nor that of the Church. He has

recourse in it to natural reason alone, although in the highest matters this is insufficient. Book One deals with the existence and attributes of God. It was characteristic of the mediæval world that it believed that the existence of God can be demonstrated by logically coercive proofs. The second Book shows how all things proceed from God as regards their being and their characteristic qualities. He speaks of the different kinds of substances, and in particular of spiritual substances, especially of the soul of man, its spiritual nature and its personality. The third Book shows that God is the "end" of all things, and that man's supreme good is the contemplation of God. Providence controls all things, but without compromising human freedom. God's laws are the ideal expression of man's duties. The fourth Book expounds the Christian revelation, beyond the power of man's unaided reason to discover, but here shown to be not contrary to reason.

From the time of St. Thomas, Scholasticism begins to decline. The two greatest names in its closing period are both British. Duns Scotus was born, probably in Ireland, in 1274.

He was a Franciscan, who taught in Oxford and Paris, and died in 1308. His own age called him the "Subtle Doctor," but a later time derived the epithet *dunce* from his name. The work of Aquinas had been done so completely and thoroughly that little remained for a man of wide culture and restless mind but to differ from him! Such differing was made the more easy, of course, by the traditional rivalry of Franciscans and Dominicans. He had a critical rather than a constructive mind, and distinguishes and defines overmuch. He lays extreme emphasis on the distinction between philosophy and theology, but insists that there can be no conflict between them, because philosophy is entirely subordinate to theology. Reason must be silent before mystery. Nothing could be more reasonable than faith in the word of God.

All created things, he taught, are knit together in one by their dependence on God, who is Infinite Actuality, and also by the essential unity which is at the very foundation of the contingent universe. The *individual* alone is fully and completely objective and real; the

universal, as an independent form, is a product of thought. Essence and existence are not identical, but are very closely united. He held that the will of God is logically prior to His reason, which seems to put an element of arbitrary irrationality at the heart of metaphysics, and even of ethics. Good is good because God wills it.

William of Ockham († 1349) was an Englishman, and also a Franciscan, and a graduate of Oxford and Paris. He was much involved in the disputes of his time between the Papacy and the Empire, his political theory being largely influenced by the *Politics* of Aristotle. He was a leader among those Franciscans who insisted on a strict interpretation of their rule. He is more extreme as a nominalist than is Duns. The universal, he taught, has no reality at all outside the mind. It does not exist in any sense in nature, but takes the place in the mind of the multitude of things to which the mind attributes it. He denies all distinction between essence and existence. He divided in the sharpest way the sphere of faith from that of reason, enlarging the sphere in which

the intellect is incapable of reaching certainty, and holding a view of religious belief similar to that of modern pragmatists. The existence and attributes of God are in no way demonstrable by reason; they derive their authority entirely from revelation. His attitude to reason had much influence on that of Luther.

Ockham's razor is very famous as a principle of scientific method; it is that entities must not be multiplied unnecessarily. It means that of two possible explanations of any event we must always, other things being equal, choose the simpler. This is quite sound, as a principle of method; but it is one of the reasons why science is abstract, and possibly untrue; because, for all we know, the reality in any particular case may be complicated, and not simple.

Books to Read

Dionysius the Areopagite: *The Divine Names and the Mystical Theology.* Trans. by C. E. Rolt.

Alice Gardner: *Studies in John the Scot.*

Étienne Gilson: *The Philosophy of S. Thomas Aquinas.*

P. H. Wicksteed: *The Reaction between Dogma and Theology, Illustrated from the Works of S. Thomas Aquinas.*

Fr. Joseph Rickaby: *Scholasticism.*

Chapter VI

The Renaissance and the Reformation

THE watershed between the Middle Ages and the Modern World, arbitrary as all such distinctions are to some extent, is the great upheaval which in general culture men call the Renaissance, but which appears in religion and theology as the Reformation. The beginnings of this movement appear before 1400, and it took nearly three centuries to work itself out. As the classical period came to an end in St. Augustine, so the "Golden Middle Age" is summed up in Dante and Aquinas. Differing from each other in many respects, they are alike in this, that, whatever they are, they are not "modern." They share the certainty and the simplicity, the breadth and the limitations, the devotional temper as well as the confidence in reasoning, of the mediæval Catholic tradition. Both are austere and intolerant, and both show the greatness as well as the pathos which

result when life and thinking are dominated by the sanctions and inspirations of supernatural religion. Prayer, as well as speculation, seems to them a fit instrument for seeking truth, and the authority of revelation is unquestioned. They are not concerned with what they think or feel about religion, but with religious realities themselves. As Dean Church said of Dante, their mind is "set on objects." God and His angels are real, and belief in immortality is vivid and simple, like the faith of a little child. The supernatural is assumed; it is "there"; the invisible world and the visible are part of the same whole. Dante refers all human action directly to purgatory, heaven, and hell. Even here he is a member of the unseen world, and his only interest, ultimately, is in the eternal issues of life.

The Renaissance was a definite turning away from Christianity, a reconciliation with the paganism which humanity had tried and proved inadequate, by opposing which the ancient Catholic Church had won its right to survive. Its characteristic notes are questioning and speculation, its interests are outside, independ-

ent of, the Christian ideal. This world and the glory of it make the other world grow dim. Life becomes secular. Man and his strength and beauty and self-sufficiency are so fascinatingly interesting that God is forgotten. "Human, all too human" are the thought and art and life of that age. The Madonna and Child are still painted, but men adore human motherhood now, rather than the mystery of the Incarnation. The Last Supper means the parting of friends, for men are no longer certain that the Host is the Body of God. Renaissance art often has Christian subjects, but less often is it Christian art. Mystery and solemnity are no longer natural. As in pre-Christian paganism, death moves men to think, not of the life beyond, but of the sweetness and strength and beauty of life here. The guiding star of the fifteenth century is the greatness of man; its faith is a dangerous challenge to the Christian pessimism about human nature which is the driving power of the gospel of repentance and grace. It sets against the austerity of the Christian denial of the world a warmer, less saintly, more human ideal, a facile confidence in human

passion, a greed of pleasure for pleasure's sake, a wantonness which, when it ceased to be refined, became almost a delight in corruption. Even in its greatest and most satisfying personalities, in Leonardo da Vinci, for example, the Renaissance expressed a pride of intellect, a self-conscious culture (which had no suspicion that its learning was as shallow as it was wide) as far as possible from the ethical simplicity of the "babes" to whom the mystery of Christ is revealed. A man would not be quite content to call Leonardo a Christian. And in the common rank and file of the more characteristic figures of the period, absorption in abstract ideas produced a kind of indifferentism, an easily tolerant open-mindedness, content to be ignorant of the spiritual world, and issuing in a claim to independence from the moral as well as the religious standards of an earlier time. Among many men and women of the Renaissance, artists and thinkers and ecclesiastics and men of action, a care for physical beauty, a deep delight in the body, became almost literally a rival religion. The moral failure of heathenism is repeated on a more self-

conscious level, and is therefore a greater failure. The discovery of the individual was non-moral, it insisted on his rights, rather than on his duties; it meant self-assertion and self-pleasing, and the beginning of the wilful, half-mocking ignorance which is common in the modern reaction towards Christian faith and practice.

The causes of the Renaissance are obscure. The influence of particular events like the fall of Constantinople in 1453 has been exaggerated, and the voyaging that discovered America and rounded the Cape to India and Japan is at least as much a symptom of the stirring restlessness of men's minds as it is a cause of it. This new assertion of human individuality found expression in ecclesiastical matters through the failure of the great Councils of the fifteenth century. Constitutionalism in the government of the Church, Councils in authority along with the Pope (the head and the members together, not the head in lonely despotism over the members), might have been, it seems to a later age, the contribution of Church government to the guidance of that perilously changing time. But the Papacy emerged from

the great Councils stronger, more autocratic, than it entered them. And then, as always, the fruit of autocracy was revolution and anarchy. That is the real meaning of the Reformation in Northern Europe. The freedom of the Christian man, which was one of Luther's most characteristic principles (as it was the title of his most important, although one of his shortest, books), was only a destructive influence because authority had so hardened into despotism as to make it almost impossible for freedom to express itself through membership in the Catholic Society.

The logical source of the Reformation is the kind of individualism which implies the right or, rather, the duty of the individual to be the final judge of truth—the infallibility of the man in the street. Individualism, for strength and for weakness, for evil and for good, is the mark of the change from the Middle Ages. The growth of commerce meant increasing competition, and the development of individual enterprise. Individualism in religion had its good side in increased religious earnestness, and an emphasis on inward reality. Books of pri-

vate prayer became more common. But it also meant the growth of rationalism, and the disappearance of the discipline and guidance for the conscience which men had found in the confessional.

An important, inevitable accompaniment of such individualism appears in the revolt of the laity against the clergy, which to some appears the fundamental meaning of the Reformation. One obvious difference between mediæval and modern thought springs from the assertion of the duty of the human spirit to do its work independent of theological dictation. Philosophy, science, art, and politics no longer receive their orders from theology. Life, some would say, has been emancipated from religion. And, to this day, defenders of the Reformation describe it as an emancipation of religion from the Church. The Protestant theory is that the sphere of religious duty is the secular life. Their ideal is not so much the renouncing of the world as the efficient exploitation of what after all is God's world and not the devil's. In spite of the vivid belief in heaven and hell which the Reformers carried with them from

the mediæval Church, as Protestantism has understood itself more clearly, the religion of Protestants has ceased to be otherworldly and transcendental.

The two great formative thinkers who express the influences that have created the modern world are Bacon and Descartes. To say this implies that the Renaissance was, even more than a return to antiquity, a return to nature. It has the realism, the appeal to experience, which mark the "modern mind," and a boundless curiosity which thinks that nothing can be so surprising but that it may turn out to be true. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) popularised a new logical method. He criticised with damaging thoroughness the mediæval thinkers, and especially their thought about nature, and he stated, clearly and once for all, the psychological causes of the prejudices and errors which lead men astray in their search for truth. This last, perhaps his chief contribution to the philosophical and scientific progress of the days that were to follow, was his famous doctrine of *Idola*, or phantoms of the mind. These are the Phantoms of the Tribe, which are

those common to all men; the Phantoms of the Cave, which depend on the nature, character, or training of the individual; the Phantoms of the Market Place, the false suggestions which arise from intercourse with one's fellow-men, and, specially, from words and the easy mistakes which come from their careless use; and the Phantoms of the Theatre, the vainly imagined false philosophies, fantastic shows, neither realities nor copies of reality, which had tried to forecast what the world must be. In the place of these false methods, he aims at putting the inductive or empirical method; his *Novum Organum* was to take the place of the *Organon* of Aristotle, the syllogism was to give place to observation and induction. Bacon overestimated the simplicity of Nature, and expected that the whole truth about the universe would be known in a few years. It is not true to say that he did not recognise the function of hypothesis in the progress of science, but it is certain that he had no idea of the great part that imagination, disciplined, of course, by a submissiveness in the presence of facts, was to play in the process of discovery. Although, he

did not invent induction or the empirical method, it is largely through his influence that they have been used during the last three centuries. Nature and experiment became the main sources of knowledge. Macaulay, who had no exaggerated love for Bacon, did him no more than justice when he said that he "moved the intellects which have moved the world." Bacon himself described much of the modern ideal when he claimed for himself that he "is gifted by nature with a desire to seek, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to reconsider, carefulness to dispose and set in order; and as being a man that neither affects what is new nor admires what is old." He made little attempt to apply his own method. He was strangely blind to the importance of the work of Copernicus and Galileo in astronomy, of Harvey on the circulation of the blood, and of Gilbert in electricity. At the same time, he represents the anti-spiritual and anti-humanist element in modern science, and in the mechanical and industrial civilisation which has sprung from it, for he looks on truth as a means to man's advancement, rather than

an end in itself. His aim is the dominion of man over nature. He believes that knowledge is power, the means to gaining wealth and happiness, and it is on that ground that he gives himself, and expects others to give themselves, to the advancement of learning.

Greater than Bacon, in his influence on modern methods of thought, was DESCARTES (1596-1650). He, and not Comte—not even Kant—is the true Copernicus of modern philosophy. As Huxley once said, he is great because he expresses the thoughts that were everybody's two or three centuries after him. He maintained the right of private judgment to an extent which implied that doubting is a duty. Everything that can be doubted must be doubted. We must free ourselves from all uncertainties. Guesses, prejudices, the things that we believe because we have been told them, must all be given up, not as steps in the way to scepticism, but to leave the foundation free on which true knowledge can be built. When we press this method as far as it will go, we find that there is only one proposition a man cannot doubt, and that is that he himself exists;

for he must exist in order that he may be able to doubt his own existence. Descartes puts it in a famous phrase, *cogito ergo sum*, I think, therefore I am. Whatever else is doubtful, this at least I cannot doubt, that I, as a thinking being, exist.

On this foundation he proceeds to build his philosophy. The first principle of his thinking, *cogito ergo sum*, is accepted because it is self-evident. It is so clear and distinct that no proof of it need be offered. The mind is being cleared of all doubtful knowledge. It follows that everything that is known must be clearly and distinctly known, and that everything that presents itself to the mind clearly and distinctly is *known*, it must be accepted, it is true. Descartes will hold nothing for true except what he clearly and distinctly knows to be true. He maintains, however, that among these clear and distinct ideas is that of God as a perfect Being. God, then, exists. Then the mind, testing its ideas, that it may discover how much that claims the name of "knowledge" is really clear and distinct, begins to examine the physical world, and discovers that what are known

as the "secondary" qualities of matter—colours, tastes, etc.—are very variable, and do not seem to belong to the objects themselves. All that remains, fixed and sure and above criticism, "clear and distinct," is extension and motion. This, then, is the truth about the physical world, this is the reality of it, motion and extension. Descartes recognises three kinds of substance: God, the thinking mind, and extended substance, which has the capacity to move in space. How mind and matter can act on each other he does not explain. How can we know the external, material world, for example? He practically brings in the supernatural to explain such interaction, and appeals to the trustworthiness of God to justify our belief that physical things correspond to our ideas of them. He held that animals are conscious automata (to be consistent he should have included man), and that all the movements of their bodies are to be explained on mechanical principles, without any assumption that "consciousness" or "spirit" or "life" have any effect upon them.

Descartes was the first to apply mathematical methods to physical science. In this he

was earlier than Galileo, and discovered the method that made possible the work of Newton, Sir J. J. Thompson, and Einstein. He killed once for all the mythological science, with all its "occult qualities," conceptions like "desire" and "affinity" and "soul" and "substantial form," and phrases like "nature abhors a vacuum," which had "saved the face" of mediæval natural philosophers. "Final causes," also, so far as science is concerned, Descartes cleared out of the way. Before him, science had been frankly anthropomorphic. He set before himself the ideal of making it purely mechanical. "Give me space and movement," he said, "and I will create the world." After him, the type of all knowledge is mathematics. It, alone, completely and in detail satisfies his criterion of being "clear and distinct." Any event is held to be "explained" when we can state its "cause." The ideal of physics and astronomy is to construct a complete view of the universe, as a machine whose future behaviour can be completely deduced from its present condition; and chemistry, biology, and psychology will conform to the ideal of the

Cartesian method when all the phenomena which they study have been successfully expressed in mathematical equations—when, in other words, matter, inorganic and organic, and organisms and minds have been explained as machines or mechanical constructions. The spirit is banished from nature. The word "purpose" has no meaning. And the "supernatural" is that which we do not yet understand.

On one side of it, therefore, the Cartesian philosophy implies, and develops into, determinism and materialism. But on the other side it implies, and is the root of, subjective idealism, in its strength and in its weakness. If the only proposition which is absolutely indubitable is "I think, therefore I am," then it follows that the only things I know directly are the states of my own mind, and I have no escape, logically, from the sceptical person who reminds me that I know nothing else, or from the idealist who says that everything that exists is mental through and through. Some would press Descartes' doubt further, and claim that "*I* think, therefore *I* am" is already the product

of inference working on immediate experience. That there is an "I" at all is an assumption, or at best a construction. Strictly speaking, Descartes' irreducible minimum ought to have been, "There is consciousness." But as there is no meaning in the idea of a conscious state or a sensation which does not belong to a self, that argument is not very impressive. A more damaging criticism of Descartes, however, is that consciousness is essentially a relation between subject and object. The indubitable minimum is not "I think, therefore I am," but "I am conscious of something, therefore I and an external world *are*." A more general and fundamental criticism of Descartes would be that we have no reason to suppose that clearness and distinctness are common marks of the truth about the actual universe in which we live. It seems highly probable, indeed, that reality is of such a nature that an adequate description of it must inevitably be, not simple, clear, and distinct, but complex, involved, and hard to be understood. Clearness and distinctness are probably the marks of truth in mathematics, which is

the most abstract of all studies; but metaphysics is the most concrete.

The predominant influence of Descartes, however, has been in the sphere of mathematics and physical science, and in the naturalism which is implied in his method of dealing with those subjects. The change which he initiated here explains many of the characteristics of modern thinking. It helps us to understand why one after another of the sciences has emancipated itself from theology. The whole trend of the last three centuries has been to circumscribe the thought and the life of man to this present world. There all his activities find their inspiration and their aim, their source and their whole reference. Man has ceased to be a pilgrim, he is ceasing even to be a tripper; he is only a citizen and a worker. The transcendent is an empty word. Eternal life is no longer real. The spirit is banished from our thinking, and conscience tends to be ignored also. So it comes about that the characteristic products of modern science are explosives and war-ships. "Science without conscience is damnation."

Books to Read

Dean Church: *Dante.*
Walter Pater: *The Renaissance.*
T. Fowler: *Francis Bacon.*
Descartes: *Meditations; Discourse on Method.*

Chapter VII

From Hobbes to Hume

IN Descartes' circle in Paris there lived for some time an Englishman, THOMAS HOBBES (1588-1679). When Descartes published his *Meditations on the First Philosophy*, he asked for objections from his friends and acquaintances, and of the seven objections to which he replied in detail the third was by Hobbes. Hobbes was a very voluminous writer, publishing between thirty and forty different books. The best-known of his books is *Leviathan* (1651), but his thought is set out systematically in three works—*De Corpore* (of bodies), *De Homine* (of Man), and *De Cive* (of the State). There are, according to Hobbes, two kinds of bodies, natural bodies, which include the human body, and bodies politic, or commonwealths, which are made by the wills and agreements of men. There is a natural condition of bodies which results from

their mutual interaction and is the basis for any manipulation or control of them. This is true of human bodies among the rest, and the natural conditions of mankind may be so regulated as to form a state. The other fundamental idea in Hobbes' system is his division of knowledge into two parts, science and experience. Science is the body of consequences and inferences drawn from a basis of facts or experience. About the consequences and inferences it would not be hard to persuade men, but the experiences of different men are so radically different that deep divisions may appear which only the intervention of constituted authority can settle. Hobbes' account of the science of bodies need not now be discussed in detail, although the physiological psychology which was so influential a generation ago probably finds part of its ancestry in the ideas of Hobbes and Descartes. But the extreme individualism of Hobbes saw men as so fundamentally different from each other that a state of nature would be a state of war "of every man against every man." Society, therefore, can only exist upon a basis of absolute despotism.

This individualism is not only associated with his name for all time, but has had a profound influence on political and ethical thinking ever since. Man is a selfish animal, he held, knowing nothing of right and wrong, of justice or duty, but moved by his natural desires and aversions just as a stone is affected by the forces which play upon it from without. Life would be all strife and warfare if men did not agree to transfer all authority and power to a sovereign state, which they obey because it has the power of the sword, and can force them to do so. For a hundred years Hobbes was spoken and written against, but without reference to him it is impossible fully to understand either the cynical self-seeking of English public life in the eighteenth century or the Whig revolution of the century before. Since he wrote, two conceptions of society—of the Church and of the State—have competed for men's acceptance. There is the mechanical theory that each individual is an isolated unit, and that society is the result of a contract whose only sanction is that it is profitable to individuals. Each member submits to authority

because it pays him to keep society going. Out of this view came such different modern things as the joint stock company, the theory of the Church common in Nonconformist circles, Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, English Whiggery, and the assumption that liberty and equality are more "natural" to man than obedience and service. The alternative conviction is that society, whether Church or State, is an organism, and logically prior to the individual. Obedience is natural and spiritual, it means the willing subjection of the part to the welfare of the whole. Man's dignity is to serve, for the glory of God and the good of society. The knightly virtue of loyalty is opposed to the commercial virtue of independence.

The strife about religion which was the immediate outcome of the Reformation, if not of the Renaissance, led some people to reject all creeds and dogmas as unimportant. Others accepted an exaggerated individualism, which found fitting expression in the religious chaos of the Commonwealth period. Others, again, found refuge in rationalism, the authority of the reason of the individual man, assumed to

be the same, and to work by the same laws, in all men. These assumptions of liberalism—the undogmatic temper, individualism, and belief in reason—made a strong appeal to the group of thinkers and scholars who are known as the CAMBRIDGE PLATONISTS. With one exception, they had all belonged to Emmanuel College, and they were all resident teachers at Cambridge between 1633 and 1688. The best known among them are Whichcote (1607-1683), Culverwell (†1651), John Smith (1618-1652), Cudworth (1617-1688), and Henry More (1614-1687). In ecclesiastical matters—and ecclesiastical parties were of dominating importance in that age—they were moderate men. They believed in toleration, and urged the rights of freedom of opinion, both in philosophy and theology. They were called Latitudinarians—"broad" men—by those who were not of their party. They insisted on the central and fundamental place of Reason in religion, although they included more in Reason than the dry logic-chopping which is all that some people denote by that word. "Reason," said Benjamin Whichcote,

"is the divine governor of man's life, it is the very voice of God." Reason is the faculty which apprehends and judges all truth, revealed as well as natural. It apprehends the truths of natural science and morality, and the great truth of natural religion, which is that God exists and is good and wise, and also the revealed truths of the scriptures; and reason finds them all alike reasonable. God is the true object of man's reason; by exercising his reason in science and ethics man learns more and more of God, until he becomes expert in "Divine Sagacity." The real presence of God in his reason enables him to judge what is essential in Holy Scripture. It is noteworthy that this represents the first attempt, of any importance, to give a philosophical context to non-Roman theology. So against Puritan and Anglican, both appealing to authority, but each to his own, the Cambridge Platonists appeal to the characteristic Renaissance faith in man's reason. "The judgment of the well-instructed and virtuous man" is to be trusted in religion, morals and politics. It is especially characteristic of them that they make this well-instructed indi-

vidual reason, interpreting the scriptures, the ultimate authority in religion.

The immediate intellectual ancestry of the Cambridge Platonists is probably twofold. They owed a great deal to the anti-Calvinist movement in England which arose under Elizabeth (Hooker is the most weighty name connected with it), and came to represent the sober, cultured tradition in English thinking. The hard dogmatism of Geneva, with its terrible logic, had yielded to a psychological temper which was specially remarkable in the interpretation of scripture. But much more important, philosophically, was the Renaissance revolt against the Aristotelianism which had become the official philosophy of the Church. This began in Florence, in the fifteenth century, in a Platonic Academy founded by Cosimo de Medici. The chief figure in the movement was Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). He translated Plato into Latin, and his translation is still the best that Italy can boast. Later, he published translations of Plotinus and of Dionysius the Areopagite, and a treatise on the Platonic doctrine of Immortality. He

identified the teaching of Plato with that of the Neoplatonists (which is almost the same, perhaps, as saying that it is the Plato of the Myths, rather than of the Dialogues, to whom he looks), and he managed, like some before and since his time, to combine an unquestioning faith in Christianity with a whole-hearted acceptance of Plato. He did it, as others have done, by identifying religion with philosophy. Ficino is often quoted by the Cambridge thinkers, and Whichcote and his pupil Smith, the former before 1633, taught Plato and Plotinus in Cambridge. "Platonism as religious experience" is, perhaps, a not unfair brief description of Plotinus, and it certainly represents one large element in the thought of the Cambridge Latitudinarians. They understood "experience" to mean the habitual concentration of affection, will, and understanding upon God, because of His own loveliness, excellency, and beauty. Reason, then, is transformed by the intimate presence of God; it becomes "Divine Sagacity," a "nativity from above." Professor J. A. Stewart has well said that their view

was that the interpreter of inspired Scripture must be himself inspired.

They held that the faculty of religious knowledge is Reason, a Reason transformed and uplifted by fellowship with God, but still man's reason. They believed that all that is good in Plato and Pythagoras was derived by them from the Old Testament, and they taught that those truths of Revelation which, though apprehended by reason, could not have been discovered by it, appear in fragmentary and obscure forms in the writings of heathen philosophers. The Platonic union with God seems to them the same as the experience of him who said, "Christ liveth in me."

Descartes is also important as an influence on the Cambridge Platonists. They looked upon his philosophy of nature as the body of which Platonism is the soul. Indeed, his appeal to mathematical clearness as the test of truth is obviously congenial to the spirit of Latitudinarianism. They could not help facing the fact, however, that Descartes' mechanical interpretation of the natural universe could

be reconciled very easily with a system of "materialism and atheism." They adopted it, therefore, along with a belief in a sort of divine immanence, a "Soul of nature," which has no place in Descartes' own thought.

But they also differed from him in their view of the foundations of ethics. Descartes had taught, reviving an opinion of Duns Scotus against St. Thomas Aquinas, that the distinction between right and wrong, like that between true and false, depends, not on reason, —on the eternal nature of things,—but on the arbitrary will of God. The Cambridge Platonists reject this notion. These distinctions, they hold, are essential; they belong to the law of the ideal world. The system of rules, by which the Divine Will acts, corresponds, of course, to the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, and knowledge, as distinct from error, is man's participation in these ideas, which are at once God's thoughts, from which, by the action of the will, the sensible world is produced, and also the mental forms in us by means of which we take hold of phenomena of sense, and organise them into real experience.

The Cambridge Platonists hold an important place in the development of moral theory in England. Hobbes had taught the natural selfishness and violence of the individual man. Whichcote and his successors emphasised, as against Hobbes, the "natural good temper" or "fellow feeling" which binds men together into a real unity. Shaftesbury, at the end of the seventeenth century, and Butler, in the eighteenth century, expanded this idea of man's natural "benevolence," but the notion was derived from the psychological observation of the Cambridge Platonists.

The most important name in seventeenth-century English philosophy is, however, that of JOHN LOCKE (1632-1704). His philosophy was marked by a cautious resolve to plant his feet on the firm ground of experience; it is the definite beginning of that Empiricism which is the characteristic British school of philosophy. He shows the influence of Descartes, not only in such small things as his fondness for the word "idea," but in a fierce dislike of all obscurity; and he reveals the revolt from the scholasticism which he had been taught in Oxford, in an al-

most morbid fear of systematising and of the use of technical terms. He did for the philosophy of the period what Mr. Bernard Shaw did for the economics of a generation ago. He made it speak the language of "the man in the street." His philosophical writings were unusually popular because they represent the essence of the "common sense" of the educated classes of the time.

Locke's system is really a criticism of the mind as a knowing instrument. The sort of question that he sets out to answer is, What can the mind know, what are the limitations of knowledge? He holds that knowledge is the perception of the agreement or disagreement of our ideas, and he defines an idea as "whatever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks" or "whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking." Ideas are the objects of minds, the appearances of things as those appearances are presented to the mind or "in" the mind. He assumes that minds exist, that things exist "outside" the mind, and that the mind apprehends ideas which, in some indefinable way, are related to

the things. "When we think of a colour or a figure which we did not think of before there is some alteration in the mind." "I see or perceive or have ideas when it pleases God that I should, but in a way that I cannot comprehend." The ideas, then, are such perceptions as God has permitted us to receive, and has given power to external objects to produce in us by established laws and ways, suitable to his wisdom and goodness, though incomprehensible to us. The mind, that is to say, is purely passive in knowledge, a *tabula rasa*, a sort of wax tablet on which the external world produces its impressions, and our knowledge can never extend beyond our own ideas, which have an inexplicable existence between the things which they represent and the mind which understands them.

This theory of knowledge is the significant element in Locke's philosophy. We can see quite clearly, for example, how it involves extreme individualism. Each man's world is his own ideas and, although there is an external world outside them, no two individuals ever "perceive" or "think about" the same thing.

It is often, and rightly, said that the Whig Revolution of 1688 expressed the philosophy of Locke. Not only was he the friend of some of the chief actors in that great drama, but his philosophy offers a metaphysical and psychological interpretation of that individualism which had received an extreme ethical interpretation in Hobbes and is the tap-root of modern Liberalism.

Berkeley (1685-1753), Bishop of Cloyne, is the founder of modern idealism. His philosophy seeks to retain the description of the universe offered by common sense or science, with an explanation of it in terms of the will of God instead of matter. He holds the apparently paradoxical theory that the things we perceive exist only so long as a mind perceives them. "To be" means "to be perceived" (*esse est percipi*). If an object which I am now perceiving still exists when I no longer perceive it, I must suppose some other mind or minds to be perceiving the object at all times when I do not perceive it. No single human mind, nor all human minds together, perceive the whole of nature at any time. It follows

that nature as a whole must exist as an object of perception for the eternal, all-inclusive mind which is God. Berkeley's philosophy has been wittily summed up in a limerick by Father Ronald Knox:

> There once was a man who said, "God
> Must think it exceedingly odd
> If He finds that this tree
> Continues to be
> When there's no one about in the Quad."

There is more to be said in favour of Berkeley's idealism, and it is much harder to refute, than seems probable at first sight. If we use "idea" in Locke's sense of the word, the qualities of external objects, of "material things," are ideas; Berkeley calls them "ideas of sense." This is true of the *secondary* qualities, as they are called (colour, taste, smell, etc.), and also of the *primary* qualities (shape, size, hardness). It is obvious that for these, to be is to be perceived. Common sense, however, thinks of the qualities as inherent in particular things. We say, the head is red, the brow is high, and so on. We think of a *substance*, an indefinite, imperceptible "somewhat," which in some in-

conceivable way "possesses" the qualities, or which "causes" the "ideas of sense" in our minds. Berkeley will have none of these "substances." A "thing," for him, is merely a "collection" of ideas of sense, which is marked off from other "collections" or "things" by a distinctive name. A thing is not a substantial "somewhat" which owns qualities; it is a recurrent group of colours, tastes, smells, etc. Berkeley, that is to say, substitutes "object for a mind" for "quality inherent in a substance." His theory makes no difference, of course, to what we perceive, but it makes a great deal of difference to the way we think of what we perceive. We perceive the effect, certain sensations, and we infer the cause, which is matter. But Berkeley cannot understand how *matter* can act on *spirit*. He perceives the effect, sensations, and he infers the cause, God. Nature, in his view, is a means of communication between God and created spirits, just as human bodies are instruments of communication between one human personality and another. The universe is a society of spirits.

Dr. Johnson, with characteristically English

contempt for subtle thinking, thought that he had disposed of Berkeley's theory by kicking a stone. In fact, he had done nothing but prove that he did not understand the theory, for, as we have seen, it makes no difference at all to what we perceive. Berkeley accepts the facts of perception as whole-heartedly as do the scientist and the artist. Hardness is hardness, roughness is roughness, brown is brown, whether Berkeley's idealism be true or false. It has, however, been objected to Berkeley's system that it does not make it easy to distinguish what is *real*, in the world of the senses, from what is *imaginary*. There is considerable force in this. In reply to it, Berkeley is reduced to saying that the real is more vivid than the imaginary, and it is not dependent on any will. This is far from satisfactory, for it would not show the delusiveness of the pink lizards which a dipsomaniac saw creeping up the wall, and would prove helpless before the commonplaces of the New Psychology. But Berkeley is not by any means the only thinker who has found the problem of error too much for him.

The most obvious criticism of Berkeley is to

point out that "to exist" is certainly not the same as to be perceived. Perception may be the ground of my belief that a particular thing exists. But to say that I see a horse is not the same thing as to say that a horse exists. To say that the horse I see exists is more than to say the horse I see is the horse I see, but the two statements would be the same if "to be" means "to be perceived." "An object must exist in order to be perceived, but its existence is not simply identical with its being perceived." The other main objection to Berkeley's system is that it shuts me up to direct knowledge only of myself and my own sensations; the universe is a dream which each man dreams in private. God and my fellow-man are alike inferences drawn from my own sensible experiences.

David Hume (1711-1776) completed the development from Locke, through Berkeley, and showed how that line of thought could be made to issue in scepticism. Locke had begun with three classes of entities, the mind, things in the external world, and the ideas which are what the mind thinks about, and are produced

in the mind by external things. Berkeley, as we have seen, eliminated from this scheme the external things. The qualities, primary and secondary, do not subsist in any "thing," they are not held together, as Locke supposed, by any material substance, they are held together by the perceiving mind, and the only existence they have is as "objects" for some "subject"; being perceived is the meaning of existence. Hume went further. There is, he held, no more need to assume or infer a thinking or perceiving "substance" than a material substance. If we can do without a "thing" of which the sensations we have are the qualities, we can, equally, do without the assumption of a "self" which holds these perceptions together. All that we have experience of is our perceptions. We cannot discover anywhere a mind distinct from its perceptions. If we take them away, there is nothing left. Perceptions are our only objects, and knowledge is confined to them, and to the relations between them. There are perceptions or, as Hume calls them, impressions (it is noteworthy that his choice of a word assumes that the mind is passive in knowledge),

and there are ideas or images, which are copies, more or less vivid, of impressions. This gives us a test by which "ideas" can be judged. "When we entertain any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived?* And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion." Hume assumes that an idea is invalid if it has no single distinct impression as its source. Actual sense experience is the only source of true knowledge. The idea of substance, for example, is asserted to be invalid because it turns out to be "a collection of simple ideas that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned to them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection." Similarly, the idea of cause and effect is dismissed as nothing, but the product of the persistent habit of human nature to expect similar facts to be followed by similar experiences. The mind, that is to say, is shut up to its own perceptions. It cannot trust any inferences from those per-

ceptions. And as its own existence is not directly perceived, it is not justified in believing in its own existence.

Hume's philosophy, like every thorough-going scepticism, is riddled with contradictions. It could probably be shown that it is all built up on arguments which are not the copies of single distinct impressions. It all assumes the law of contradiction, for example, that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time. But not even the ingenuity of a Hume could derive that law from sensible experience. It is also probable that Hume's scepticism falls to the ground if we decline to make with him the initial assumption that experience is merely perceptions, instead of perceptions *of something*. Hume is an indication that it is possible for men to lose faith in truth. His philosophy is a refusal to ask the meaning of experience.

Books to Read

Hobbes: *Leviathan.*
Locke: *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.*
Berkeley: *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous.*
Hume: *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding.*
Hoernlé: *Idealism.*

Chapter VIII

Spinoza and Leibnitz

THE successors of Descartes attacked in various ways the problems which he had raised. ARNOLD GEULINCX (1624-1669) deals with the question of the relation of soul and body. For him, extension (or space—the essence of matter) and thought are not connected in any way. They cannot act on each other. External events are not the causes of mental states, and mental states are not the causes of external events. We are merely spectators of the physical universe. God wills that when I feel afraid my legs shall run. Body and mind are like two clocks which act together, because both have been set by God to keep the same time. A physical occurrence is the occasion on which God excites in me a corresponding mental state, and an act of my will is the occasion on which God moves my body. (The theory of Geulincx is, therefore, commonly called

Occasionalism.) God is in truth the only cause in the universe. This is a theory which is in many ways very attractive, and is by no means out of date. So very modern a philosopher as the present Dean of St. Paul's says, "I reject altogether the idea of interphenomenal causation. Events cannot be causes or consequences of other events. . . . To attribute efficient causation to matter seems impossible. . . . And to suppose that causation begins with consciousness is to introduce an impossible cleft between things and persons. . . . The reign of law and purpose extends over the organic and inorganic alike. The only difference is that conscious beings are able to think God's thoughts after him . . . while Nature . . . obeys without knowing what she does. The cause of events is the will of God." This, if not explicitly occasionalism, seems to involve it.

Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) was a priest of the Oratory. He developed the pantheistic element in Cartesianism, as it had come to him from Geulincx, who held at last that apart from God finite beings, whether individual persons or particular things, have no reality

and we only have the idea of them from God. Malebranche held that we see all things in God. We know things not because they are themselves directly present to our minds; what we apprehend is God's idea of a thing. The only being which is actually present to our minds is God. Unless we saw Him, therefore, we should see nothing else. Ourselves we do not know at all, in the sense that we know God, and objects in God. We are conscious of ourselves by inner sense. We know *that* we are, we do not know *what* we are. Malebranche, being a Catholic priest, stops short of explicit pantheism, but he says that God is complete in Himself, without particular things and individual persons, and that these exist only by the arbitrary fiat of God.

We come now to SPINOZA, one of the greatest in the history of thought, the noblest Jew that has lived since the death of St. Paul. Hegel has said, "Either Spinozism, or no philosophy," and it is almost impossible to exaggerate Spinoza's influence on later thinkers. Probably nobody has ever accepted his system, but his ideas have been, and still are, fruitful.

There is, and always has been, considerable difference of opinion as to what he meant.

Spinoza was a Jew, of Spanish descent. He was born in Amsterdam in 1632. At the age of twenty-four he was excommunicated from the Synagogue for heretical views. He earned his living by grinding lenses, living very frugally, well within his scanty means, so that he had much time for philosophy. At one time he had a small pension from John de Witte, but he refused a professorship of philosophy at Heidelberg, offered him on condition that he did not oppose Christianity. He died in 1677, at the age of forty-five.

The main influences in Spinoza's thought were four: his Judaism; the great mediaeval Jewish philosophers, who resembled closely the scholastics, in that their great task was to express theology in terms of Aristotle; Giordano Bruno, a pantheist and scientist who had been burnt by the Inquisition, who seems to have been indebted to Neoplatonism; and Descartes. He never accepted Cartesianism, apparently. His Jewish instincts led him to emphasise the unity and the uniformity of ultimate reality,

as Descartes never did. But from one point of view, Spinoza was more of a dualist than Descartes. The latter did admit some action of mind on matter, but Spinoza said that God is the only reality, that mind and matter are modes in God, and cannot act on each other. On the level of the finite he was a dualist.

The *Ethica*, Spinoza's most important book, is presented in geometrical form, that is to say, in axioms, definitions, propositions, and corollaries. It was all assumed, probably, in the definitions. But it is noteworthy that the mathematical method is not so rigid as it looks, for Spinoza is reduced at times to showing in different kinds of notes that his doctrine has a basis in experience.

He held that the sole reality is God, a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, of which each is perceived by the intellect to constitute the essence of God. It is curious that he defines an attribute as *that which the intellect perceives*. Hegel thought that an attribute was meant by Spinoza to be purely subjective (that is, perceived, but not really there to be perceived).

The balance of opinion, however, is that Spinoza believed that the attributes are more real than the finite intellect, since the intellect only arises in a particular mode or modification of one attribute.

We can form two clear ideas of substance, according to Spinoza, as extended and as thinking. Hence extension and thought, each coextensive with substance, and therefore infinite, are *attributes* of God. The attributes are eternally together in substance; one could not have been produced from another; each expresses the reality of substance. So that the essence of God is as adequately revealed in extension as in thought. There is no reason to suppose, however, that extension and thought are the only attributes of God, although they are the only attributes of which we are aware. Spinoza himself believed that there is an infinite series of attributes. In a letter to Tschirnhausen, he seems to say that every mode of every attribute other than thought has a separate mind or modification of thought to itself. There is also a note by Leibnitz of a conversation with Tschirnhausen about Spinoza: "He thinks

there are infinite other positive attributes besides thought and extension. But in all of them there is thought, as in this world there is extension." The result is that thought, instead of being co-equal with the infinity of other attributes, is infinitely infinite. Thought is in a position of superiority to extension, but only theoretically.

Spinoza's system is strongly intellectualist. There are three sorts of knowledge, he holds. First, opinion or imagination, "knowledge from the mere suggestions of experience," and reports, and statements read. Secondly, reasonable knowledge, "from the fact that we have notions common to all men, and adequate ideas of the properties of things." Thirdly, knowledge or intuition "proceeds from an adequate idea of the absolute essence of some attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things." What we call an act of will is really a particular kind of judgment—an affirmation or negation, will and understanding being the same thing. There is no such thing as free will. Our delusion that we are free arises from our knowledge of the effect while

we are ignorant of the cause. A particular wish is determined by a cause, which has also been determined by another cause, and this last by another, and so on to infinity. Spinoza has, however, another and different explanation of particular things and events. He asserts that the existence of a finite thing is part of its essence or nature, and this essence is determined directly by God.

Since an individual mind is only a finite mode in one attribute, it is quite impossible that a man should become omniscient in this life. Yet third knowledge or intuition seems to involve omniscience. The intellectual love of God, by which we can see all things under the pattern of eternity, is certainly based on third knowledge; and Spinoza holds that we can love God intellectually. The intellectual love of God is part of God's love towards Himself. Even on this mortal and temporal plane piety and religion are the highest happiness. Because we rejoice therein, we are able to control our lusts. "Whence it appears, how potent is the wise man, and how much he surpasses the ignorant man, who is driven only by his lusts. For the

ignorant man is not only distracted in various ways by external causes, without ever gaining the true acquiescence of his spirit, but moreover lives, as it were unwitting of himself, and of God, and of things, and as soon as he ceases to suffer, ceases also to be. Whereas the wise man . . . is scarcely at all disturbed in spirit, but, being conscious of himself, and of God, and of things, by a certain eternal necessity, never ceases to be, but always possesses true acquiescence of his spirit."

It is not easy to say what Spinoza means by immortality. Everything is equally eternal, but men alone are immortal, and not all men, but only the wise and the good. When a man fixes his mind on eternal truths his mind becomes filled with eternal things, and death does not matter. Spinoza does not mean, by immortality, duration in time. Eternity is not anything different from the eternity of the multiplication table (it is an eternal truth that twice two are four), it means rational necessity. But he distinguishes between immortality and eternity.

"If the way which I have pointed out," he

says, "as leading to this result (immortality and true acquiescence) seems exceedingly hard, it may nevertheless be discovered. Needs must it be hard, since it is so seldom found. How would it be possible, if salvation were ready to our hand, and could without great labour be found, that it should be by almost all men neglected. But all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare."

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716) was a great philosopher, a great mathematician, and wrote on physics and history. Unlike Descartes and Spinoza, he was a man of affairs. He lived much about courts, and did good work for Hanover. On the whole, his thought is at the opposite pole from that of Spinoza. While the latter appeals to all those whose intellectual sympathies are with monism, Leibnitz is the typical pluralist. There are four fundamental ideas in his thinking. The first two, closely connected, are those of force and plurality. The third is the law of continuity. All change must be gradual, therefore there must be continuity in space and time. And, because nature makes no leaps, the difference

between any two things most like each other in the universe must, Leibnitz assumes, be gradual. And his last great idea is the reconciliation of the two ideas of purpose (final cause, the philosophers call it) and cause (efficient cause).

Leibnitz's thinking is best understood from the starting point of Force. This idea was quite foreign to Descartes and Spinoza, owing to their fondness for the geometrical method. Descartes even held that mind or spirit is essentially thought, that is, it is passive. Spinoza thought of the individual mind as a mode, without initiative or freedom, the plaything of other modes. Leibnitz says that without force there can be neither individuality nor plurality nor purpose, nothing but mechanical causation. Force, having no properties in common with extension, is indivisible, simple, without beginning or end, it is eternal. To create or destroy a force would require the miraculous power of God. There is an infinite number of forces.

Since these forces are not extended, they are not material in their nature; they must be spiritual. Our spirits must be forces. Each of these forces is a substance or subject. (Des-

cartes had said that matter is substance, and Spinoza taught that God is "the" substance.) Leibnitz believed in a plurality of substances. He always talks of "a" substance, and believed that they are distinguished from each other by their activities. These substances, separate and unique in their nature, he calls by a name derived from Pythagoras, but more immediately from Giordano Bruno. They are *monads*, absolutely separate from each other, without any relation beyond the fact that they are all created by the same God. Each monad is limited, and this limitation is the quality in the monad which produces matter. Matter is continuous, and is not only infinitely divisible but is also actually subdivided without end. Corresponding to the smallest piece of matter there is an infinite number of monads. The ruling monad is the soul of the organism, the other monads cause the matter which is its body. All animals and plants are organic unities. Inorganic matter is a mere aggregate of parts, each of which is an organism. A pebble, that is to say, is like a flock of sheep. The parts of an organism are themselves organisms, and so *ad infinitum*.

There are, therefore, infinite grades of organisms.

Each monad is separate from all others, no other monad can affect it, nor does it affect others. It is itself spontaneous activity, moving, developing by an inward self-determination towards its own ideal or end. The monads act by "final causation." [1] Matter, the body, acts by efficient causation. This means, of course, that all real causation is "final," for, according to Leibnitz, the monads are the reality of the universe; matter is only a confusion resulting from the limitation of the monads.

But if monads do not act on each other, and the final causation which is internal to each monad is alone real, how can knowledge be real and trustworthy, and what right has a man to expect that if he wills to lift his hand, his hand will move? Liebnitz holds that, at the Creation, a harmony was pre-established between any monad and the rest of the universe, so that at any moment the happenings of

[1] The monads are *pulled* by what will be, not *pushed* by what has been. "Final cause" is almost the same as "purpose."

the outside universe are pictured in the monad. The pictures are not copied from the universe, they arise independently. Each monad is a microcosm, "the universe in little," but each is entirely independent. The connection between the monads is only ideal. If God, by a miracle, annihilated the universe, I should not know the difference. It is the most extreme form of individualism that has ever found philosophical statement.

Leibnitz illustrated his paradoxical theory of "pre-established harmony" in two ways. Imagine two clock-faces which always indicate the same time. This may arise in one of four ways. The hands on the two dials may be moved by the same set of works. The faces may be connected by machinery, so that what happens in one clock causes what happens in the second. Or only one clock may have works, but there may be somebody inside the second clock who turns its hands so that it always agrees with the first clock. This is very like the theory that we have called Occasionalism. But, lastly, the two clocks may agree always because they were made, and wound up, so as to keep

the same time. This resembles the state of things which Leibnitz believed to exist, and described by the name, "a pre-established harmony." He also illustrated his view from two independent bands of musicians playing the same tune at the same time in perfect agreement.

There can hardly be any way of proving that the "pre-established harmony" is true. It seems far-fetched, and does not seem to explain the general belief that some of our knowledge is "true" and some is "false." But if we assume, with Leibnitz, the complete independence of the monads, and grant that we have certain perceptions, we must believe that these either do, or do not, give us knowledge of the external world. In the latter case, we are shut up to scepticism, or to the belief that I and my perceptions are all that exist. In the former case, remembering that no "self" is acted on by any external cause, either we must take refuge in Occasionalism, which does not seem fitting for God, or we must accept the pre-established harmony.

Leibnitz believed in God; he was, indeed, an orthodox Christian. God is a substance, and this tends to place Him on a level with the monads. Like all forms of pluralism, Leibnitz's philosophy made the monads so real that, logically, God seems unnecessary. It has been said that except for Christianity he might have held the monads to be eternal and have called God the Pre-Established Harmony. Hegel records a tradition that Leibnitz called God "Monas Monadum," the Monad of Monads. But this is an entirely meaningless phrase, and Mr. Bertrand Russell has only been able to find two places, which are quite possibly slips, where Leibnitz speaks of God as a "monad." It is, however, true to say, that in this philosophy God and Man are too much alike to make it easy to find room for any doctrine of the Incarnation.

Leibnitz's philosophy was systematised, in rather a wooden fashion, by CHRISTIAN WOLFF (1697-1754), whose claim to be remembered is that it was in his system that Immanuel Kant was brought up, and his failure to criticise the

limitations of possible human knowledge was the "dogmatic slumber" from which Kant was awakened by the ruthless scepticism of Hume.

Books to Read

Spinoza: *The Ethics.*
Sir F. Pollock: *Spinoza, His Life and Philosophy.*
Leibnitz: *The Monadology.*
The Hon. Bertrand Russell: *Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibnitz.*

Chapter IX

Immanuel Kant

TO do justice to IMMANUEL KANT (1724-1804) we must remember that his work is a reply to Hume, the Scottish Sceptic. It was Hume, Kant says, who awoke him from his dogmatic slumbers. To those who have not read Hume, or who read him when one hundred and fifty years have blunted the force of his attack, Kant may seem very negative, almost a pure agnostic. He emphasises the fact that all that we can know is the appearance of things and that the realities which morality and religion demand are never more than assumptions. But in relation to Hume's reduction of the individual mind to a mere succession of sensations, and his denial of the validity of the idea of cause and effect (a denial which, if true, makes the sensations useless as material for knowledge of the external world), Kant's claim that some knowledge is possible is itself

a great advance. Little is infinitely more than none, and the difference between agnosticism and scepticism is just as great.

A second reason why Kant's work seems more negative than it was is that the *Critique of Pure Reason* is much his best-known work. Of the three Critiques, however, this is in many ways the most negative. It is in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that Immortality, God, and Freedom, as necessary implications of the fact of man's conscience, are dealt with; and practically half of the *Critique of Judgment* deals with teleology. Kant recognises an immanent purpose in the physical universe, and of this he declares that there is no account so adequate as to say that it expresses the design of a personal Creator. The fact that Kant's system was only slowly completed, that the publication of the three Critiques covered a space of nine or ten years, and that the first was the least positive of the three, leads to a real misunderstanding of the Kantian position.

The third preliminary consideration necessary if Kant's philosophy is not to be misunderstood is that he was interested in physics. Des-

cartes and Spinoza were mathematicians, and tended to substitute the idea of "reason" for that of "cause." The knowledge of physics, however, had made great strides during the century before Kant, largely owing to the prestige of Sir Isaac Newton. The philosophy of any period is most influenced by the science which *is making most progress* at the time, not that about which most is known. So the philosophy of the nineteenth century was dominated by biology, and that of the twentieth century shows signs of being moulded, and made most amazingly difficult, by mathematics. The philosophy of Kant shows at every point the influence of Newtonian physics, and it has been said that its central idea was mechanical causation.

What, then, did Kant achieve? Stripped of his love for elaborate divisions, his barbarous and sometimes inexact phraseology, and his wearisome habit of repeating himself in different words, there is much in Kant's thought of permanent and vitalising interest. There are no Kantians to-day, in the sense in which there are, or were until very recently, Hegelians.

His system, as a system, has not stood the test of time. But Kant exercises over subsequent speculation an influence both wide and deep. All philosophy before Kant is ancient; all philosophy since Kant is modern. It is impossible to grasp what is most characteristic in nineteenth-century thought without some understanding of the difference which Kant made.

Kant's first great contribution lies in the realm of the theory of knowledge. He emphasises and re-emphasises the *activity* of the knowing and perceiving subject in all experience. It is important to remember that experience is always the experience of some individual, and that the individual has a large share in making it. The mind is not a *tabula rasa*, a clean sheet, on which the external world writes what it pleases; rather is it ever active, choosing and arranging what would otherwise be an undifferentiated chaos. Time and space, Kant suggests, are not objective existences, but are the forms in which we perceive things. It would be more true to say that space is in me than that I am in space. They are the contribution which sensation makes to the systema-

tisation of the manifold of experience. In the same way, the understanding does its share in this task through the "categories," or "notions of the understanding." These are such conceptions as cause and effect, substance and accident, unity and plurality, purpose, and so on. They are not to be observed, they are not parts of experience, but rather belong to the mind's organisations of its own experience. They are not invalid, but they belong to what the subject brings to his own knowledge. What we know, then, is not the thing as it is in itself, but the thing as it appears to us. We cannot get outside the subject-object relations; knowledge is fundamental.

Two things follow from this. First, since the knowing, perceiving, active subject plays so large a part in the origination of experience, it is idle to pretend that the subject himself is no more than a product of the object, an epiphenomenon. Kant placed the argument against materialism in a new sphere. The onus of proof now is on the materialist. It is much more likely, since Bishop Berkeley and Immanuel Kant, that matter has no existence apart

from, independent of, mind than that mind has no existence independent of matter. Materialism has been put on the defensive.

The second thing that follows from Kant's theory of knowledge, or perhaps it is the same blow to materialism put in another way, is the assertion that all that we get in the knowledge the senses give us is *appearance*. The implicit trust in *facts* which was at the bottom of much dogmatic naturalism (and the dogmatism of scientists is not less obscurantist and one-sided than that of theology) will not bear examination in the light of the critical philosophy. Facts are, in part at least, the creations of the mind and senses that perceive them. "Trust your senses" is the postulate of all thinking in the natural sciences; and apart from the curious contradiction that modern physics builds on this trust of the senses, a theory that the physical universe is entirely different from what it seems to the senses, the perceptions of sense are not the reality as it is in itself, but the reality as it appears to us. Phenomena are all that we know; reality is for ever unknown. As Mr. Charles Marriott has said, "what we call facts

are, after all, only convenient fancies for dealing with the mystery of life. . . . The facts, even if they exist at all, are doubtful in character, and the only sure thing about the senses is that they are misleading." The theory of the unreality of material phenomena, to which Newman was so curiously inclined in boyhood, has sufficient to say for itself to deliver us from the naïve slavery to *facts* which seemed so unquestionable to the scientific realists of the 'sixties and 'seventies of last century.

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant moves a little from his absolute agnosticism as to the "thing in itself" behind the world of phenomena. Even in the *Critique of Pure Reason* he had hinted that the supersensible mystery which is the unknown reality behind the world of natural phenomena may be not entirely alien from the reality of the ego. "Both kinds of objects differ from each other, not internally, but only so far as the one *appears* external to the other; possibly what is at the basis of phenomenal matter as a thing in itself may not be so heterogeneous after all as we imagine." This is from the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the

Critique of Judgment he is more definite. "There must be a ground of the *unity* of the supersensible, which lies at the basis of nature, with that which the concept of freedom practically contains." What this seems to mean is that the reality with which we have intercourse in our natural experience is God. He is the Absolute with which our experience relates us.

Kant's second great contribution to thought was his negative criticism of the scholastic arguments for theism, which were attempts to prove the existence of God by reasoning which would "coerce" the understanding as does mathematical reasoning. Since Kant it has been generally recognised that none of them can be fully reinstated. The Ontological Argument has been already discussed.[1] The argument for a first Cause seems now a poor attempt to demonstrate by reasoning what would be far from satisfying the needs of faith. The argument from Design (what Kant calls the Physico-theological argument) is the most widely popular of the three. But Kant held, and Newman agreed with him, that the natural

[1] See above, p. 97.

world, with the signs of purpose and design that it affords, does not shut a man up, without logical possibility of escape, to say, "This cannot be explained without God." And yet, honeycombed with difficulties as the argument is, Kant was quite certain, even when he wrote the *Critique of Judgment*, that no other explanation which has been offered of the facts of the natural world is anything like so satisfactory.

Kant's destructive criticism of these arguments is not so confidently accepted, however, as it was a generation ago. It seems almost certain that he had not read the great classical statements, in St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, of the arguments which he set out to refute. It is generally agreed, also, that he misunderstood St. Anselm's ontological argument, upon which, logically, the other arguments for theism depend; and the revived interest in Platonism has led to more respect being given to the ontological argument, and, consequently, to a restoration of credit to the rational proofs of God's existence. Few modern thinkers, however, would give as much weight

to these arguments as they had before Kant's time.

Kant's third great contribution is that he has evoked the great affirmations of natural religion—God, Freedom, and Immortality—in the unchallengeable facts of man's moral life. The reality of his faith can only be appreciated by those who recognise the new sincerity that he brought to the discussion of moral issues, startlingly new as compared with the arid thinness of the contemporary German rationalists, or with the flippancy of Voltaire, or the shallow optimism of the English Deists. Every reader of Kant who is morally alive feels the sincerity and reality of what he says about conscience.

Morality first brings us the notion that we are free. The fact that we *ought* to do a certain thing implies that we are *free* to do it. The moral law is a law of freedom. Similarly man's moral intuitions and their absolute authority imply an absolute personal righteousness. If conscience is to be ultimately valid, it is not really thinkable that the universe is not on its side. Kant believed that this implied, neces-

sarily, a God. As he puts it, in his curiously negative way, "It is not impossible that morality of mind should have a connection as cause with happiness (as an effect in the sensible world) if not immediate, yet mediate (namely, through an intelligent Author of nature), and moreover necessary." Morality is not reasonable unless the best world is possible, and that possibility implies the existence of God. As Varisco says, "Value will or will not be permanent according as the divine personality does or does not exist." This connection of value with personality, also, is the meaning of Kant's argument that immortality is bound up with the absolute authority of conscience. Values must be permanent if this is to be a world in which men can do their duty. All values, righteousness above all, are values *for* somebody; they imply personality. The absolute obligation of duty is the guarantee of immortality.

FICHTE (1762-1814) was a development from Kant. In particular, he worked out to the full all the results of Kant's belief that the conscience or practical reason can be trusted as giving us a vision of reality. The only reason

for believing in a world at all, he held, is as a sphere in which man can do his duty. The only reason for believing in other selves is that except in society duty is impossible. Consciousness of self and consciousness of not self—of "another"—go together. The active moral self is fundamental for philosophy. By man activity he makes his world. Immortality, then, for Fichte was important, but there was no room in the system for belief in God. His ethical earnestness affected our national life and literature through Carlyle, who owed much to him.

Schelling (1775-1854) was not willing to accept as adequate the idea of the "not-self," of the *external world*, as merely a limitation, negative, an obstacle, in relation with which the ego or self lives a moral life. He holds the view that nature, equally with mind, is an expression of the Absolute. The Absolute, that is to say, becomes a sort of neutral receptacle within which all that is neutral and all that is material alike lose their characteristics. As Hegel expressed it, "In the night all cows are black." But to many people that criticism

seems to apply to all forms of Absolutism alike, Hegel's along with the others.

Books to Read

Norman Clark: *An Introduction to Kant's Philosophy.*
E. Caird: *The Critical Philosophy of Kant.*
Kant: *Critique of Practical Reason, and other Works on the Theory of Ethics.*

Chapter X

Hegel, Schopenhauer, Lotze and Nietzsche

THE philosophical system of G. W. F. Hegel (1779-1831) is the most difficult of modern philosophies, as it is probably the greatest; it is certainly very remarkable and ambitious. The great difficulty about it, especially in attempting a simple abridgment of it, is that the proof of the whole system, contained in the *Logik*, is one single continuous chain of argument, in which there are over two hundred distinct and separate steps. Much that has had a great influence on popular thought, for example, Hegel's *Philosophy of History* and his *Philosophy of Religion*, is entirely dependent on the *Logik*, in the sense that they are applications of what is there proved. It is, also, necessary to remember that many of the points which seem very important to us were not important to Hegel. At the present time, there is widespread distrust of any kind of meta-

physics, and the sort of scientific common sense which assumes materialism in a crude or refined form is very common. Hegel lived in an age which had confidence in human reason. Idealism held the field. The result is that Hegel is not chiefly concerned to prove that materialism is invalid, but to show that his form of idealism is more adequate than its rivals and predecessors. His system was, undoubtedly, distorted by the exigencies of controversy.

Hegel's chief characteristic was, indeed, his thorough-going idealism. There can never be a more complete idealism than his. This means that the world of life, consciousness, and purpose, and the world of space and matter, mechanical causes, atoms and electrons, which to uncritical common sense seem equally real (if, indeed, common sense does not hold the latter to be more real than the former), are, for Hegel, not equally real. What is real is Spirit. Kant's idealism was imperfect; he leaves the Self and the thing-in-itself equally real and ultimate, although he gives mind an essential and active part in all experience. Fichte went further. He aimed at complete idealism, but

did not attain it. He declares that matter is unreal, but by so doing admits that it is not spiritual. He is like a man fighting his own shadow, for he cannot get away from what he has said is unreal. Schelling secured a sort of monism. The Absolute for him was One, and all-inclusive. But it was not more spiritual in his view than it was natural, it was a neutral. It was a dead unity, not a living one, the kind of unity which becomes more abstract and useless the larger it grows. Hegel insisted that matter is real, but that it is really spiritual. Whereas Fichte was individualistic in an exaggerated and false way, so that he almost goes to the extreme of making any experience the whole of reality, Hegel asserts an Absolute Unity whose reality consists in manifesting itself in individuals. Similarly, whereas Pre-Kantian thought had considered the unity of the whole opposed to the reality of the parts, Hegel insists that unity and differentiation are equally necessary to each other.

Hegel's argument starts from an absolute basis. He assumes the category of Being, in other words, that there is such a thing as real-

ity, or that experience really exists, or that something *is*. Consider the proposition, nothing exists. Then if the proposition is true, the proposition itself exists, and proves itself false by its very existence. Every truth can be denied, but the denial of the category of Being contradicts itself. This first step of Hegel's argument resembles, in some ways, Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum*.[1]

If we abstract from any object of thought every category except that of being, if, that is to say, we remove every quality and adjective until we have nothing left but mere existence, so that we can say literally nothing about the object beyond the fact that it exists, we see at once that this thing is indistinguishable from nothing. The category of mere being implies necessarily its opposite—nothing. But these two are in clear opposition to each other. The law of contradiction will not allow us to say of anything that it both *is* and *is not* at the same time, and in the same sense. But we come to see that these two contradictory categories can be taken together, if we consider

[1] See above, pp. 121, 122.

each as the complement of the other. Both Being and Non-being are included in the idea of Becoming. So the first "movement" in Hegel's *Logik* is from the thesis: Being, to the antithesis, Nothing, and then forward to the synthesis, Becoming.

So the whole dialectic process moves forward. Each category, as the mind apprehends it, reveals its inadequacy by showing that it implies its opposite. The contradiction so manifested is reconciled in the less abstract, richer conception of the synthesis. Then the higher category so arrived at becomes the thesis in a new "triad." And the dialectic process moves in this way from the abstract to the concrete. Its beginning, as we have seen, is the most abstract conception of all, pure, empty being; its goal is the richest, most adequate, fullest, most concrete of all concepts—Absolute Spirit, within which universality and self-differentiation are one, the Concrete Universal, essentially self-conscious, a conscious unity in all its process, consciously the source of endless distinctions within itself, an identity manifesting itself in its differences, and claiming them as its own.

The elements on which the dialectic process is built up, the "triads," as they have been called, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, deserve a little further consideration. The place of the negative—the denial—the antithesis—in the whole process is very significant. When we remember that Hegel's work as "Professor Extraordinary" at Jena began, at the age of 26, in 1805, when the terrific upheaval of the French Revolution had issued in the Caesarism of Napoleon, and when we recall how inescapable has been the effect of that upheaval on all the spiritual life of the nineteenth century, it is impossible not to see that effect in the inevitable place of the "negative" in Hegel's thinking. To those who were born before the Revolution, and had known the condition of things which had produced it, it was impossible not to believe that, in spite of all its excesses, it represented, not mere chaos and destruction, but the spirit of man set free to conquer and organise the realm of matter and force. It set a real problem, therefore, to idealism; and in the dialectic process we see Hegel solving that problem by showing the necessary place of the

negative element, in reality and in the mind's apprehension of it. It is significant, however, that the "triad" form, with its equality of the antithesis and thesis, becomes less marked as the *Logik* approaches its conclusion. The higher the categories with which the mind is dealing (the less inadequate, in other words, they are to the description of Reality), the smaller the part played by the negative element. The last transitions are the merging of a category into its successor, with little suggestion of the distinction of positive and negative, as between thesis and antithesis.

We are accustomed in ordinary logic, in the syllogism, for example, to discover that there can be no more in the conclusion than there was in the premises. Does not the fact that Hegel's dialectic begins with the empty and abstract and ends with the Concrete Universal prove that the process is essentially illogical, and that by some mental jugglery what is produced at the end has been imported surreptitiously into the argument? The clearest answer to this difficulty is that given by the late F. H. Bradley. He points out that although the mind has be-

fore it a single category, which is more or less abstract so long as it is not the final category in which the process ends, the Absolute Idea itself, nevertheless the whole mind engages in the process, and the total reality of the Absolute Idea is implicit in the mind. We do not realise this presence of the mind, because the mind, while it is actually doing the work of thinking, is not an object presented to itself. But it is the fact that the mind, in which the Absolute thinks itself, is apprehending the more or less abstract category, and the tension so set up between the absolute and the concrete, which produces the result. The Absolute Idea in which the dialectic process ends was, indeed, present from the beginning, but it was present, not to the mind, but in the mind.

Hegel's system is an Absolute Idealism. For him, subject and object, in all experience, are transparent to each other. Thought is the stuff of reality. It follows, then, that this *Logik*, the dialectic process, is not only an account of how the mind comes to apprehend reality, it is also an account of reality itself. The science

of Logic is identical with metaphysics, the science of the Absolute. The reality of the universe is one with the reality of the reason. The rational is the real, and the real is the rational. In the mind's knowledge of the Absolute, the Absolute knows itself, just as in knowing the Absolute, the mind knows itself.

This dialectic method is the essential part of Hegel's philosophy. All the rest is dependent on that, and is secondary to it. What is called the *History of Philosophy*, for example, is only a demonstration of how the actual systems of philosophy have been related to those which preceded them, and to those which followed them, as, in the dialectic, the antithesis is related to its thesis and to the synthesis. Similarly, the *Philosophy of History* shows history not merely as one event after another, but as the dialectic expressed in time. (We must remember, however, that although the dialectic process is a valid description of reality, reality itself is not, in its truest nature, a process, but a timeless and therefore static state, completely rational and perfect.) The dialectic process can be applied to, and

illustrated in, ethical problems. We have, for example, a "triad" with innocence as thesis, sin as antithesis, and virtue as synthesis, and we have a minor "triad" with sin as thesis, punishment as antithesis, and repentance as synthesis. But the most important application of the dialectic is the *Philosophy of Religion*.

There are few Hegelians now. The mental climate of the last fifty years has not been favourable to intense Idealism. In part, the decay of Hegelianism has been due, in an age interested in natural science, to "its presumptuous attempt to withdraw the hypotheses of metaphysics from the supreme jurisdiction of facts." In part, however, we must admit that the natural materialism of the ordinary man has rejected Hegel's unfaltering trust in reason. But wherever, and so long as, any trace of Hegel's influence remains, men will not forget that only the highest categories of all are adequate to describe reality. Purpose rather than efficient cause ("pull," not "push"), not mechanism but Spirit, will make us free of the secret of all things.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER (1788-1860) is

chiefly known as the typical pessimist among European philosophers. He was a thorough student of Kant's philosophy and a pupil of Fichte, but a fierce opponent of Fichte and Hegel. He held that the ultimate reality in the universe is will, of which intelligence is a secondary product. The "struggle for existence" urges us blindly forward. Every living creature seeks a satisfaction which is never attained, or attained only to yield place to a new desire. "Man never is, but always to be, blessed." Life is unceasing struggle, desire unsatisfied; hence it is full of the misery and suffering of disappointment. It is a swinging of the pendulum between pain and boredom. Life, then, is not worth living. If there were a God, He must have been tormented by a devil to create a world like this; but there is no God. This is the worst of all possible worlds, for if the evils which afflict us were any worse than they are, we should cease to be. Dante, indeed, could describe hell with illustrations drawn from earth, but not paradise.

Since the individual will—self-assertion—is the root of evil, the only salvation, Schopen-

hauer teaches, is by the conquering of the "will to live." This can be accomplished by self-denial, the renunciation of existence, or, curiously, by the disinterested contemplation of beauty. For the true ascetic (which Schopenhauer certainly was not), "the inner nature is itself abolished." As in the similar case of the Buddhist conception of Nirvana, it is not easy to be certain whether this result of conquering the will to live is annihilation or some state of contemplative bliss. His statements seem to be mutually inconsistent.

The weaknesses of Schopenhauer's philosophy are obvious. It is impossible to give any meaning to the idea of blind, unconscious will, or to understand how intelligence would be produced by such an unintelligent "urge." Further, it is not true that desire or striving which does not attain its end is painful. Experience seems to show, on the contrary, that the conflict in itself, for creatures in normal health, is delightful. The truth is, of course, that pessimism does not rest upon argument, it only defends itself with argument. In itself, it is a matter of temperament. A recent view is that

it is a disease, partly physical, a pathological condition due to the failure of the endocrine glands to function.

Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) is the most important link between the post-Kantian Idealism which reached its climax in Hegel and the philosophers of natural science with whom we shall be dealing in the next chapter of this book. It has been said that Lotze first directed the results of German Idealism to genuinely fruitful issues. He had the advantage of studying Herbart's criticism of Hegel which, if it fell far short of an adequate comprehension of the master's thought, at least made clear what were the dangers to which the study of Hegel might lead smaller men. To Herbart, it seemed that Hegel's emphasis on the unity of the Absolute must lead to a minimising of the part which individual persons play in the scheme of things. Philosophy will not then explain, but rather explain away, experience. On this side of his thought, Lotze emphasised the reality of human freedom, of the causal connection between body and soul (and therefore of the real effect of thought and will

in the external world), and of the predominance of soul over body. He makes the conception of "value" fundamental for thought. He shows that in contact with the "values" which individuals recognise in life they find freedom and satisfaction for their own spirits. With the help of these values they are able to mould the external world, and to change the course of history. So Lotze came to the view of a "Kingdom of God" which is a "Realm of Ends"; of God as the ruler and governor in that free kingdom; of that which is unconditionally valuable as being the root of what is ultimately real; and of metaphysics as based on ethics. The "is" is rooted in what "ought to be."

The other main element in Lotze's thought is based on his relation to natural science. All his work was done in the period when scientific progress was most brilliant and rapid, and when the claims of scientific theory were held to be unchallengeable. Among his earlier publications were monographs advocating the application of mechanical conceptions, such as cause and effect, to physiology and psychology. He insisted that mechanism has universal sway,

and extends not only over inorganic nature, but also over living organisms. We may be permitted, at the present stage of scientific development, to doubt whether that claim can be made good in its completeness. Biology, not to speak of psychology, seems to involve processes which are only misunderstood if we insist on interpreting them in mechanical terms. But we must face the fact that nearly all the progress of science during the last three hundred years has resulted from the attempt to apply mechanical conceptions wherever possible. And it is important to notice that Lotze began his attack on naturalism by conceding to the science of his time all that it claimed. But if he gave mechanism universal extent, he severely limited its significance. So far from being the ultimate reality, it is the sum of the means by which the spiritual element in the universe realises itself.

The foundation of all scientific thinking is the idea of "cause." We say that one event causes another, or, more loosely, that one thing causes another. A match in a powder magazine causes an explosion. The present state of the

universe is the cause, that is, the sufficient explanation, of the state which immediately follows. There is no doubt, however, that this whole way of talking is so obscure as to have very little meaning. Lotze showed that it is not only difficult to show the connection between an act of will and an outward event, as when I say, "I will to raise my hand," and my hand moves, it is no easier to show why the motion of one billiard ball causes another ball to move. He tries to explain how one event causes another by emphasising the unity of the universe. If the whole of things is eternal, and therefore unchangeable, we can understand that a change in one part of it must be balanced by a corresponding change in some other part, if the whole is to remain the same. This unity is not, as in pantheism, identified with God, but with the Will of an Omnipotent, Transcendent Creator. Lotze, then, gives science, with its mechanical conceptions, full sway over the whole of reality, but makes that sway comparatively superficial. The deeper meaning of reality is seen as an expression of the unity of the Divine Will.

From the starting point of science, then, Lotze arrives at a philosophy of Nature as the expression of God's omnipotence. From the point of view of human spirits and their freedom, and the values which they seek to realise, he sees God's kingdom as a "Realm of Ends," and God as the Perfect Personal Being in whom all ideal values are given concrete reality. The God of freedom is revealed in history, the God of law is revealed in nature. And Lotze left it to later thinkers to reconcile these two conceptions.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) was, with the possible exception of Heine, the greatest literary artist in the German language. The chief influence in his thought was classical culture, and increasingly that of Rome. Schopenhauer and Wagner had much to do with moulding his youth, but the writer whom we can call his master is Goethe.

He was an optimist, one of those who say "yes" to life. He held firmly by the belief that at the heart of things there is a wild joy, a divine zest in life. "Every truth that does not bring with it at least one laugh," he says, "seems

to me false." And, again, "I could only believe in a God who knew how to dance; and when I see the devil, I find him grave, profound and solemn. He is the spirit of heaviness . . . by him all things fall." God is joy and God is freedom. "The world is perfect. Imperfection, every kind of inferiority to us, distance, the pathos of distance, even the outcasts and the mob belong to this perfection." He shouts down the degenerate wail of pessimists about the painfulness of life, by reaffirming life in all its crudity. He was satisfied with life, so that he wished to have it again and again, as it was and is, to all eternity. This is the strange and enigmatic doctrine of the "eternal recurrence," in which he taught the exact repetition, in all its details, of the cosmic game, which has no purpose and no aim, and means nothing but itself. Nietzsche's ideal philosopher is a man who insatiably calls out "encore," not only to himself, but to the whole play.

If life, and all that life contains, health and pain, joy and heaviness, strength and weakness, if they are all alike, and together, perfect, then obviously we have already passed beyond the

ordinary standards of value, we have gone, to use Nietzsche's phrase, beyond good and evil. Good now has a new meaning, and bad has a new meaning. Good means that which makes for life, and bad means that which makes against life, that which denies, that which destroys. All moral codes, according to Nietzsche, restrict life, restrain the instincts, deny the rights of nature. The only thing of value in every system of morals is that it is a long constraint. "Thou shalt not," says the decalogue. Morality has meant the restraints by which man is tamed; it is described by Nietzsche as the very instinct of degeneration, which converts itself into an imperative, and says "Perish."

So Nietzsche is an "immoralist." He will invent new values, and new sins. If morality itself is not to become fixed and dead, it must change. "Do we immoralists injure virtue in any way?" asks Nietzsche. "Just as little as the anarchists injure royalty. Only since they have been shot at do princes sit firmly on their thrones once more. Morality must be shot at." It is nothing more than a superstition that the

laws of morality are unalterable, that right and wrong, good and evil, are fixed. Nietzsche discovered the doctrine of "the transvaluation of all values." It is almost his definition of philosophy. But it is an interesting comment on it all that his own moral practice was, from the orthodox Christian point of view, unexceptionable.

Nietzsche was no democrat. He divided men into two classes, the rulers, "we" scholars, free-spirits, yea-sayers, and the slaves, the degenerates, the pessimists, the deniers. On the one side are the noble, the violent, those who are able to take and to hold, in whom the "will-to-power" is strong, who dare to live dangerously, who trust their instincts because they are strong and clean. Beneath them are the diseased, the humble, those who turn the other cheek, the self-deniers, those who love their neighbours, slave-spirits, who talk about "sin" and crush their instincts with "thou shalt not." These slaves have no rights except to serve the strong.

Pity and sympathy are bad, and must be discouraged. Through pity, suffering itself be-

comes infectious. Worse than that, pity preserves that which is ripe for death, it fights in favour of those whom life has condemned. In every noble culture pity is condemned as a weakness. But in the great religions of the world the weak have made their weaknesses into virtues, and their need into a God. Christian morality is, not the expression of the conditions of life and growth, but unhappiness polluted with the idea of sin, well-being interpreted as a danger and a temptation, disease poisoned by the canker-worm of conscience. Christianity is the triumph of all the evil and degenerate elements in life. The slave-spirits cannot be anything else than humble, so they make humility a virtue. They would be exterminated unless men were taught to spare the weak and care for the sick, so they teach sympathy and love of one's neighbour. They are without power, or beauty, or pride, or courage, without joy or strength of body, and therefore all these things are condemned as of the world. The Christian God is a staff for the weary, a sheet anchor for those who are drowning, the pauper's God, the sinner's God, the sick man's

God. "God on the Cross" is the deification of subjection, of self-derision and self-mutilation. We slave-spirits, we of the mob, all suffer, our life is one long crucifixion, we alone are sons of God. Christianity is the revolt of all things that crawl on their bellies against everything that is noble. "I call Christianity," says Nietzsche, "the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are too venomous, too underhand, too underground, and too *petty*—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind." An attack which is far from being new, and suffers from the fact that Nietzsche was never, in his adult life, a Christian himself.

Nietzsche was a strong individualist. He hated the modern worship of the State. "Deutschland über alles" almost made him ill. A man must obey himself, trust himself, improve himself. He must not degrade his hopes, his ideals, his virtues, by accepting easily the names and descriptions which others give to *their* souls. None can harm me, none can help me, save myself. "If ye wish to rise high,"

says Nietzsche, "use your own legs. Do not let yourselves be carried up, sit not on the back and head of another. You ride on a horse, you say? You gallop now swiftly towards your goal? Ah well, my friend! But your lame leg is with you on the horse. And when you have arrived, when you jump from your horse, you will stand at your own height, and stumble on your own lame leg!" Nietzsche never told any one to seek salvation; had he spoken in evangelical language he would have told men to strive to make themselves worth saving. And yet, all the time, he was sounding the contrary note. We are to make the most and best of ourselves, in order that we may have more to give. The noble person will deny himself, sacrifice himself, to bring the Super-man. What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal. It is difficult to make sure what this goal is to be, this Super-man. At times it seems to be the well-developed human animal—"the blond beast in the forest"—at times it is something like Caesar or Napoleon, but more generally and fundamentally it is the ideal represented by Goethe,

the rich individuality in which all the values of civilised culture find harmonious expression.

Nietzsche was poet and prophet as well as philosopher. He wrote with amazing rapidity. He was not careful to be consistent. He was a powerful stimulant and tonic for the tepid souls of his time and for the kind of semi-conscientiousness which succeeds in paralysing bad action and fails to animate good action. He was a great unbalanced John the Baptist; one to listen to, but not to follow.

Books to Read

J. M. E. McTaggart: *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology.*

Lotze: *Microcosmus.*

Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra; Beyond Good and Evil; The Antichrist.*

Chapter XI

Nineteenth-century Science

AUGUSTE COMTE (1798-1857) was the child of Catholic and royalist parents, but he became republican and anti-theological before he was fifteen. His philosophy is known as Positivism (from the French *positif*—"sure," "certain,") because it claimed to deal with certainties, to be based on the sure results of science. As Comte, like Francis Bacon, held that science should fulfil a social function, "positive" knowledge came to have the connotation of "useful," and also, due to the influence of Immanuel Kant, it came to mean "relative," in the sense that it depends on man's faculties, and shares their limitations.

Comte hoped for, and believed in the possibility of, a philosophy of science, which should be a synthesis of all human knowledge. Wider and deeper than this, however, he dreamed of a synthesis which should embrace all sides of

human nature, will and feeling as well as intellect, a religion which should be both scientific and human. The fundamental ideas in his system are the "Law of the three states" and the classification of the sciences which depends on that law. The law of the three states is that each branch of knowledge develops from the theological or fictitious state through the metaphysical or abstract state to the scientific or positive state. For example, diseases used to be looked on as divine punishment; later, they were thought of as entities which "attacked" people; now they are seen to be merely a dislocation of functional harmony in the organism. Similarly, the "divine right of kings" yielded to the theory of the natural rights of man, and this in its turn has issued in the conception of social duties as defined by the needs and convenience of a developing civilisation. The sciences, then, are arranged, according to their approximation to the goal of this development, as follows: mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology (including psychology), and sociology. This order has the additional advantage that it corresponds to the

order of the historical development of the sciences. Comte is generally recognised as the founder of sociology.

He expected that in the age immediately succeeding his own lifetime there would appear a philosophy founded on science, and a religion compatible with science. He thought that industry and peace were becoming the normal condition of mankind, and that war would become increasingly abnormal. Conduct, he believed, would be judged increasingly by human and social standards. The human race forms one great organism, the centre and symbol and reality of a new unity. The Religion of Humanity was to unite all men in the desire to live for others. This religion is not mere cosmopolitanism. Devotion to humanity was to be based on love of country, but a nation's glory is to be recognised as consisting in service, not in domination.

Comte invented the word *altruism*. He insisted that altruism is inconsistent with self-sacrifice or purposeless self-denial. Pleasure in itself is not evil, and asceticism, except as a training for service, is alien to the religion of

humanity. This social reference is implicit in all his teaching; it is, indeed, the supreme characteristic of positivism. It viewed all knowledge in its relation to man; it was truth for life's sake, never truth for truth's sake. It held that human knowledge can be made adequate for human needs. The fundamental fault of Comte as a thinker, however, is that he was unaware of the existence of the problem which Kant set out to solve. He has no theory of knowledge. He does not examine what we can know, and what are the necessary limits of human knowledge. This means that he accepted the claims of science at their face value, without criticising them.

On the philosophical-scientific side of his work, but not on the religious side, Comte was succeeded by JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873), whose autobiography is one of the most remarkable books of the nineteenth century. He formulated and elaborated the science of arguing from particular events to general rules, which is called Inductive Logic. He re-stated and, in part, revolutionised Deductive Logic, which is the theory of the process by which we

argue from general truths to particular instances of them. It must be confessed, however, that he failed to bridge the gulf between these two sciences. He made clear the logical structure of the ethical sciences, including politics, but in all departments of knowledge he insisted that *experience* must be the ultimate test of truth.

In psychology, he held the theory which is usually called *associationism*, according to which all the phenomena of the human mind, such as imagination, memory, and belief, involve nothing more than sensations, originally independent, combined together by the laws of association. He applied to this process the highly metaphorical term, "mental chemistry." But this whole method in psychology, which stretches from Hobbes and Locke to Herbert Spencer, is now discredited. By a psychological analysis of our perceptions of the primary qualities, such as size and hardness, as well as of the secondary qualities, such as colour and taste, he arrived at an idealistic view of reality. The external world, on his theory, is a system of "permanent possibilities of experience."

In ethics, Mill claimed to be a *utilitarian*. The fundamental principle of the school is that pleasure or happiness is the sole standard or test of human conduct. But Mill really gave this up when he admitted that there are different kinds of pleasure, some "higher" than others, and by so doing introduced a qualitative instead of a purely quantitative distinction between pleasures. He was a determinist, holding that the human will is determined by character, but that character is formed *by* a man, rather than *for* him.

Mill widened the scope of political economy so as to include the practical application of its principles. Following Comte, he viewed it as an integral part of social philosophy. In his great book on the subject he dealt with such matters as the future of the working classes, the land question, and socialism. In politics, he was a "philosophic radical." He loved the people, but he was acutely conscious of their selfish disregard of justice, and their readiness to play the tyrant. He believed in women's suffrage and proportional representation, but was opposed to voting by ballot and supported

plural voting. He was a fierce believer in liberty, and held that the less interference by government there is, the better it is. Roughly, his policy was what is called *Laissez-faire*.

In religion, he leaned to the negative side. His sensitiveness to the cruelty of nature, and the hardness and harshness of life, made it impossible for him to believe in a God at once perfectly Good, All-Wise, and Omnipotent. To keep his belief in God's benevolence and wisdom, he denied His omnipotence. He did not believe in the Incarnation, but he admired Jesus of Nazareth as the highest of all moral teachers.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was preeminently the philosopher of evolution and of social and political liberty. He was in many ways, including his complete unconsciousness of its limitations, representative of the point of view of late Victorian England. This explains his great popularity in 1875, and the complete neglect of his philosophy in 1925. His *System of Synthetic Philosophy*, planned in 1858, and completed in 1896, occupies ten out of the twenty volumes of his works. The foundation

of all thought, he held, is the truth which science and religion hold in common, that there is an ultimate cause of all phenomena, an ultimate unknowable mystery "from which all things proceed." "The Unknowable," of course, is a contradictory conception, for if we know enough about it to know that it is unknowable we already know a good deal about it. This inconsistency runs through all that Spencer says of "the Unknowable." He insists, on the one hand, that because we can know nothing about it we cannot assert that it is personal, immortal, or moral. On the other hand, he asserts that it is infinite and absolute. The religion of the future, he believed, would be a passive contemplation of "the Unknowable."

When he comes to deal with the knowable, Spencer took the two principles of physics, which had not in his days been shown to be obscure in meaning and impossible to prove, the Indestructibility of Matter and the Conservation of Energy, and combined them into the Persistence of Force. On this basis he builds up his great theory of evolution, not

only in the organic world, but in the inorganic world also. He attempted to sum up in one formula the development from nebulae to solar systems, the formation of the earth and the whole process of geological development, the evolution of animals and plants, the development of the human mind and the institutions in which it expresses itself. He sums it all up in one comprehensive formula. "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant disintegration of motion, during which the matter passes from a relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation." The aptness of this summary is obvious, but it has to be admitted that it has not proved very fruitful.

Spencer's work on biology was important in its day and many of his suggestions and theories are not yet without interest. Both his biology and psychology, however, put so much stress on the still unestablished doctrine of the inheritance of acquired properties that they hardly form part of the main line of develop-

ment in those sciences. His *Principles of Ethics*, also, lays such exclusive stress on one principle, that of freedom, that its conclusions can only be called eccentric. But to have attempted so comprehensive an examination of Man and the World as is contained in the *Synthetic Philosophy* was in itself a real title to fame.

William James (1842-1912) was an American. First a teacher of medicine, then, with James Ward of Cambridge, one of the founders of modern psychology, he became at last Professor of Philosophy in Harvard University. He was a remarkably robust and healthy thinker, with an unusual power of getting inside the minds of people widely different from himself, such as mystics and savages. His contribution to thought (apart from his epoch-making work on *The Principles of Psychology*) can be summed up under three heads: the will to believe, pragmatism, and his great study of human nature in his Gifford Lectures on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

The thesis of the essay on the *Will to Believe* is that a man may be justified in his faith,

even though he cannot prove it by logic. The scientific thinkers of the last century taught that "it is wrong always, everywhere, and for every one, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence." There are, as James points out, two commands laid upon the human intellect. We must know the truth, and we must avoid error. Huxley and W. K. Clifford said that it is more important to avoid error. But, without losing one's intellectual self-respect, it is at least equally possible to say that one will run the risk of error on the chance of discovering some truth. In this moonlighted world we are pretty sure to make mistakes, however careful we are. It may be better to be duped many times rather than to lose one's chance of coming at the truth.

This means that personal choice, the attitude of the mind, enters largely into the matter of belief or disbelief. There are some questions, of course, on which we need not come to a decision. We can quite conveniently wait for further evidence and discussion. We are not forced to choose. But sometimes we are presented with a *forced* option between two al-

ternatives, both of which are *alive*, but neither of which can be proved. For example, religion puts before men the choice, "There is a heavenly Father—there is not a heavenly Father." Neither alternative can be proved, yet the choice is important. It makes a great difference to our happiness and our energy if we really believe that this is our Father's world and that the last word will be good and not evil. No thoughtful man can say that the choice put before him by religion is trivial, and, because all true religious faith issues in action, and is tested by action, and because religious faith is ultimately a relation with a person, not so much a belief about the universe as a trust in a Friend, it must ever be beyond mere logic, super-rational, and to refuse to choose is itself an act of choice. If you do not decide for religion, you decide against it. The wise course, then, is to choose on the side of our hopes rather than of our fears. The sceptic has made his choice, we have made ours. Only Omniscience can be certain which is right. But if the sceptic is right, what has he gained? By his own principles, nothing. If we are right, we gain

strength and freedom in the love of an Almighty Friend.

Pragmatism derives its name from the Greek root of the English words "practice" and "practical." It tests all ideas by their practical value. If it finds two parties arguing, each defending its own notions, it asks, "What difference will it make to the actual world in which we live if one of these alternatives is true rather than the other?" If the answer is—"No difference"—then pragmatism says that the argument is all about nothing, the alternatives mean *practically* the same thing. "There can be no difference anywhere that doesn't make a difference elsewhere—no difference in abstract truth that doesn't express itself in a difference in concrete fact and in conduct subsequent upon that fact, imposed on somebody, somehow, somewhere, and somewhen. When Pragmatism says that a notion is true, it means that it has *value for life*, it helps men and women to live, to understand and connect and control their experience, to overcome the world. The truth of an idea is its *cash value*—its equivalent of help, of encouragement, of vital bene-

fit." Pragmatism had enough "kick" in it to finish off the sterile rationalistic "logic-chopping" into which Hegelianism had degenerated; it is good for most people, including philosophers, to be reminded that it is useful to believe what is true and to disbelieve what is false. But it is not true that the meaning of the word *truth* is "what it is useful to believe." As the western world is not prone to exaggerate the importance of truth for its own sake, the value of pragmatism soon reaches its limit.

William James's third great contribution to thought is embodied in his book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* In that book he considers, with amazing patience and most interesting illustrations, the various phenomena of the religious life. He quotes the accounts given by the *religious persons themselves* of the sense of sin, of conversion, of saintliness, of mysticism, and of prayer. He set an example, which has not proved altogether healthy, of describing and examining extreme and abnormal cases. Later workers in the same field have sometimes forgotten that for most people religion, like life, is as ordinary, because it is as healthy and

natural, as eating one's breakfast. With that warning, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is a book to read, for every one who is interested in the real experiences of real men. It tells of man's experience of God, of lives changed by conversion, of prayer which actually works, of lives lived in perpetual communion with God, of the moments when men see and hear what it is not lawful to utter, a Reality so supreme that it breaks through language and escapes. And these things are described by the men who lived through them; it is a handbook of the religions.

In his summing up, James insists that the voice of the religious consciousness of the race must be heeded and reckoned with by anybody who would deal profoundly with the question of man's spiritual environment and destiny. Is it likely that where so many people, of different races and ages and civilisations, all witness to the same experience that they are all deluded? The "mystical tradition" cannot lightly be explained away. Are the deaf to deny that others can hear? And, lastly, we must apply the pragmatic test. The goodness of religion "for living purposes" must have some objective sig-

nificance. "The whole line of testimony as to the existence of an experience of God's presence is so strong that I am unable to pooh-pooh it away."

M. Henri Bergson (b. 1859) is a professor at the College of France. He is not so easy and popular as William James; he has a power of illustrating his meaning by illuminating comparisons, a way of expressing his thought in pictures, an artistic sense, which remind one of Plato, and make him interesting, but also elusive. To a certain extent he himself has not seen all that is implied in his picture-thoughts, and his philosophy is more a method than a system.

Bergson is a child of his age in that he expresses himself in the language of evolution. He sees all life as a great current of activity and freedom, passing from individual to individual, from species to species, stooping to insinuate itself into resisting matter. Through the opposition of matter the current of life divides and diverges, losing nothing of its force, but intensifying in proportion to its advance. Along one course of evolution there is the

vegetable kingdom, later another branch of the great tree of life ends in the insects, in particular in the ants and bees, while another line of development reaches its goal in man. All reality is consciousness, activity, life. Everything is becoming, striving towards freedom, putting choice in the place of determinism, setting free spirit from law and matter. According to the mechanistic school, life is a product of matter; matter organised produces life. But according to Bergson, life organises matter. Life, activity, consciousness is ultimate, real; matter is a mere interruption, a hindrance, the opposition through which life evolves. What made the brain of a man different from the brain of an ape is, not the difference of convolutions, but the fact that the primal force of spirit found the dull ape-brain insufficient to utter its unspoken wonders, and so fashioned the nobler instrument of thought, of moral will, and of spiritual yearning. But the end is not yet. Man still drags with him the obstacle which weighs on the progress of life, but cannot stop it. That obstacle is matter, and we are not free from it yet.

The philosophy of Bergson differs from most idealistic systems in its emphasis on the reality of time. When Bergson says that reality is activity, life, consciousness, freedom, he means that time is not an illusion, or an appearance, but an ultimate reality. The reality of our life is a pure duration in which the past as memory exists in the present and presses forward with the whole activity of our will into the future. Much false thinking in science and philosophy comes from a conscious or unconscious denial of the reality of time. This is the real root of materialism. When we think of time as mere succession, one moment following another like points on a straight line, we are really reducing time to a dimension in space, and abolishing the difference between them. At the same time, we empty experience of what is novel, purposive, and expressive of the great personal values—beauty, goodness, truth and love—and make it seem possible to explain the universe, in which qualitative differences are so important, in terms of mere quantities, like forces at points in space. Materialism, that is to say, reduces all qualities to quantities be-

cause it is able to reduce time to a kind of space. Post-Hegelian Idealism, also, lays such stress upon the timeless perfection of the Absolute that it seems to empty history of all significance and the whole time-process of any reality. Any theory which weakens man's sense of the importance of life, with its conflicts, its passions, its duties, its enjoyments, is somehow wrong. The only message which can strengthen and inspire is that time is real. To-day's acts will last for ever.

Bergson is a whole-hearted believer in freedom. The whole purpose of evolution, he holds, is to introduce more and more freedom into the realm of determinism which we call the material world. The denial of freedom comes from a denial of the reality of time, for determinists speak as though there were nothing more in the present than in the past, nothing more in the effect than in the cause. But if time does nothing, it is nothing. Life, as we experience it, is a becoming in which there is no repetition, a continual new creation, where no prediction is possible, which is essentially free.

Freedom is progressive; we are not always or

altogether free. Matter, with its determinism, has not been entirely overcome. Life is made up of actions which are largely automatic, and habits and conventions form a crust round our free expression. It is only at moments of crisis, or when we are moved by deep emotion, that we seem to burst through this crust and our whole self decides our action. Free-will, as this philosophy affirms it, is *creative action*, the power and the right to create in the spiritual realm. The artist is free, the prophet is free, the righteous man is free, in the moment of their inspiration. We are free when our acts spring from our whole personality, when they express that personality. Free-will is the expression of the individuality of life. When you are most yourself, you are most free.

The foundation of Bergson's philosophy is the fact that deeper than any intellectual bond which holds a conscious being to the reality in which it lives and which it may come to know, there is a vital bond. Our knowledge depends on an intuition which is never merely intellectual. This intuition is of the very essence of life. "We have this sudden illumination,"

says Bergson, "before certain forms of maternal love, so striking and in most animals so touching, observable even in the solicitude of the plant for its seed. This love, in which some have seen the great mystery of life, may possibly deliver us life's secret. . . . It allows us a glimpse of the fact that the living being is above all a thoroughfare, and that the essence of life is in the movement by which it is transmitted. Instinct, intuition, is that without which we shall never learn life's meaning. There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which, by itself, it will never find. These things instinct alone could find; but it will never seek them." Instinct and intelligence must work together, if the secret of life is to be apprehended. The critics of M. Bergson have made great play with the difficulty of this idea. But it is perfectly simple. Instinct, intuition, is *sympathy*, in the everyday meaning of the word; the sympathy of creatures in whom the same life flows, who are flesh of one flesh, children of the same everliving Spirit. Without sympathy, intellect is blind. Sympathy alone can find the things which intellect

can never find. It can find the key to life's riddle, for sympathy is of the very essence of life.

Books to Read

J. S. Mill: *Autobiography; On Liberty; Utilitarianism.*

Herbert Spencer: *First Principles.*

William James: *Pragmatism; The Will to Believe; The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

H. Bergson: *Creative Evolution.*

A. A. Luce: *Bergson's Doctrine of Intuition.*

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